

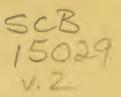
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DOLLARS AND CENTS.

ву



AMY LOTHROP.

Anna Bartlett Warner

"Penny, whence camest thou? Penny, whither goest thou? And Penny, when wilt thou return?

OLD ENGLISH PROYERS.

VOLUME II.

New York:

GEORGE P. PUTNAM, 10 PARK PLACE.

M.DCCC.LII.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Iwill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart.

WORDSWORTH.

"A BSOLUTELY left!" said Mr. Howard—"missed the stage after all my hurry; and now I can't get to Edmondtown to-day, and by to-morrow Jarvis will have gone west, and my rent in his pocket! Well—"

"One may say 'well' to almost everything," said my

stepmother gently.

"Ay, if one says it in patience—which I didn't. But I don't precisely know how I'm to get along without that money, there's the truth. McLoon has hoaxed all my tenants here except Barrington into paying me no rent till our litigations are settled; and to prosecute and turn them out would cost just about as much as it would come to. No easy work, neither,—that fellow O'Reilly keeps a loaded gun, and swears he'll shoot the first man that attempts to oust him; and he's just good enough to do it."

"O pray don't go near him!" said we, by no means of opinion that life should be risked to gain the means of

living.

"I mightn't be any better off if I got him out," said my father,—"the next tenant would like enough follow suit. If all the people together don't checkmate me, it will be a wonder! and if it was only myself it wouldn't be much matter if they did."

"But papa," said Kate, "you know we are never sad nor cast down if you are not; and as you told me once these are but trifles—just think how well we are, and how happy, in spite of it all. And as to being checkmated," she added

smiling, "the queen can make any number of diversions, and Grace and I are the willingest of all little pawns,—it would be a wonder if we couldn't uncheckmate ourselves papa."

"Yes," said Mr. Howard a little bitterly, "if one wasn't tied hand and foot! Cut off all a man's ways of raising money or almost of living, and then tell him to pay!-McLoon would contrive some sort of a debtor's prison in any country, I believe."

"Not quite," said my stepmother-" better starve out of doors than in the Fleet,—and I have no idea that we shall do either. I am sure a decree has gone forth to the contrary."

My father drew a long breath that half said she was

right and half that she knew nothing about it.

"So am I sure—when I'm in my calm senses,—once in a while this multitude of cares and arrangements presses upon me till I get bewildered, and then the world seems

upside down when it's only my poor head."

Mrs. Howard let her slight fingers rest upon his forehead, where so much rougher things had had their sway, but she said nothing; and stood looking at the fire with all a woman's unselfish sorrow in her face.

My father's eyes had taken the same direction, but the fire said different things to him-or he took them differently; for while my stepmother looked through larger and brighter tears, his face cleared up; and at length he said

with a smile.

"There is magnetism in some people's fingers, let who will deny it! I who sat down here believing myself a poor man, am suddenly deluded into thinking that I am richer than anybody else." And bringing the little hand appreciatingly to his lips, my father looked brightly towards Kate and me; and our tears were not the less ready that their source was sweetened.

"I suppose," said Mr. Howard after a pause, "since I am here, I may as well go off to Wiamee and see if there is such a thing as a man to be had; for Adam McKee and I must dissolve partnership—I can't stand him any longer."

"O papa," said Kate as he reached the door, "what if

you were to take a basket and bring us some eggs?"

He stopped and looked round, the cloud coming back a little.

"I haven't a bit of change my dear."

"I have got some!" I exclaimed, "I have got that half dollar that you gave us before you went away the last time,

papa."

"Better keep that Gracie," said my stepmother, "we might want it more. We can do very well without the eggs," she added smiling to my father; who gave us a look that was all sorrowful in its affection, and went.

"It's such a pity we haven't chickens of our own again,

mamma!" I said. "Why doesn't papa buy some?"

"It's cheaper to buy eggs, Gracie."

"O mamma! do you think so? have you forgotten the dozens of eggs Ezra Barrington used to bring us—and all for nothing?"

"But the hens didn't live upon nothing; and we have no Ezra Barrington now, but only a man who would perhaps

steal both corn and eggs."

"It's an astonishing disadvantage to poor people not to have a little money!" said Kate. "This buying in small quantities, and wearing out one's best things because just at the moment one can't get second best;—and now in this instance—we are doing without economical comforts because we can't afford to have them! I think there's a good deal of humbug about it."

She walked to the window and stood looking out.

"Katie," I said following her, "do you feel disposed to go with me to the peach-trees now?"

"Not in the least."

"But hadn't we better? Papa won't have time before he goes away, and it will be too late when he comes home.

It's a fine cloudy day, too."

"Yes I will go," she said; "but here is another of the small delusions poor people are under. To imagine that the fruit you and I must thin out, can ever be profitable!

I wish we had the money the walls cost!"

"It's not worth while to go back to that now dear," said Mrs. Howard,—"you know 'when the best things are not attainable, the best must be made of those that are.' I am very sorry you should have to do anything that you don't like, but the day is not hot—maybe the air will do

you good. And you know we found the fruit money very

well worth having last year."

"My dear mamma," said Kate laughing, "pray don't be sorry that I must do something I don't like—it's very good for me,—what I care most about is that I can't do something I like better. I would rather sit down and read than stand up and pick off little apricots and peaches. And the money is worth having—though I never can see that it makes much difference. Come Gracie—have you got the scissors?"

So passed the morning. Then came Mr. Howard and dinner, and after it a long conversation.

"Did you find a man, papa?" said Kate.

"I found so much else my dear that I didn't even look for one."

"Didn't look when you went on purpose!"-

"No.—I wish you had my dislike of exclamation points, Kate."

"But you see papa," I said, "she has tired herself with the peaches this morning, and we were thinking that per-

haps you would find somebody that could do it."

"I will before long," said Mr. Howard, taking her hand in his. "And you needn't either of you have touched the fruit—I didn't mean you should—I am very sorry you are tired."

"It hasn't hurt us papa," said Kate, her eyes giving quick answer to his change of tone. "But what did you find at Wiamee?"

"A good reason for being always patient, Kate—even when one is left by a stage-coach. If I had not been left,

we should have been checkmated with a witness."

He went on to tell us that upon going into a store in that little town, the first thing he saw was a paper signed by Self & Mulhawl advertising the whole contents of our house to be sold at auction on the following Monday. And this was Thursday afternoon.

"So that I have just time," he concluded, "to see Phibbs and set him to work. I hope it may not be too late now, but if I had got off to Edmondtown it would have been, without question; and we should have known nothing of it

till the sheriff came with his red flag."

"But what has become of the injunction?" said Mrs. Howard.

"And what can Mr. Phibbs do?" said Kate.

"Don't know I'm sure—one thing nor t'other; but lawyers can find something to do in every case,—if they can't they aren't worth much. So I must try not to miss the stage to-morrow, for that would be bad."

Mr. Phibbs, the chief lawyer of our region, did not disappoint my father's expectations: that is, he found something to do; and Mr. Howard came home in high spirits.

"It's all arranged, and Phibbs is to bring a replevin, so Self & Mulhawl will get little good by their unrighteous proceedings,"

"What is a replevin?" said Kate.

"I don't more than half know, myself," he replied, "but that doesn't matter. It's a long stick my dear, to push these people away from our front door—that's all we need understand. There must be an appraisement though, that I may know in what amount I must give security."

"What for?"

"For fear I should run away and defraud Self & Mulhawl of their 'just rights'—which I'd give them if I didn't call myself a gentleman."

"But security!" said Mrs. Howard, her face falling again,

-"you'll never be able to get it!"

"Why won't I? there's half a dozen people would give it in a moment—Adler, and Egerton, and I don't know who."

"I'm sure I don't. I wish they may not have all heard the proverb 'Let go thy hold when a wheel runs down hill.'"

"By your leave my dear, that is a speech of Lear's fool."

"May it not be a proverb for all that?" said my stepmother smiling; "and Mr. Adler wouldn't be the first man that has taken a fool's advice. But I hope it will turn out

as you say."

Monday morning came, clear, bright, and calm—we a little feverish. The mere appraisement was a disagreeable affair, even if it went no further; and as to womankind's schooling itself into the belief of all Mr. Howard and Mr. Phibbs said, that was out of the question. So with some little trepidation we saw the wand of our clock fairy ap-

proach the decimal,—what strange conjuration would then come over our household? We took our work and sat down to await it.

A little before the charmed hour appeared the sheriff (who was just at the end of his term) and the man who would succeed him,—this last had come for a lesson and to have all remnants of the business transferred to his hands. A novice he was; but Mr. Cross needed no explanation of the "long stick," and being presently satisfied that everything was in proper train, he occupied the time in giving instructions and information to his subordinate; his sharp and not over pleasant face well contrasted with the look of helpless and somewhat hopeless ignorance with which the other listened, and tried to understand, and didn't make it out.

With these two had come the appraisers. They were rough, country-looking men, one in a green baize jacket, the other in none; pantaloons that were "inexpressible" in colour at least; and boots that had certainly never before approached the dais. What could they know of Hebe or minerals?—but there they sat in our sitting-room, nevertheless.

The clock struck.—It seems to me as if I heard even now the whirring of that little time-teller, as it briskly counted out the hour and then gave place to shuffling footsteps and a call from the knocker. How my heart sprang and sunk at that conclusion! My father opened the door, and the empty frame was filled by the figures of Messrs. Self & Mulhawl.

"Walk in!"—said Mr. Howard in a tone of cool indignation, and the door was scarcely closed before another knock ushered in Mr. Jenkinson—but without his green spectacles this time. The three worthies sat down,—just opposite to them were "the village posse" with "hats a row"; and at the far end of the room we yet stood our ground—like mice in a cage of rattlesnakes, only more quiet.

Tilting back his chair the shirt-sleeved appraiser surveyed the scene with much complacency,—that curious satisfaction which a vulgar mind derives from circumstances and events where one better educated would find only pain.

As from the same chymical compound one affinity will draw an acid, and the other an alkali. His neighbour in green baize whispered him from time to time, and they exchanged little nods of sympathy. To look at their faces and then at the two near me! In these was a strange mixture of strength and weakness,—the calm resolve that rose above it all, that could say

"My mind to me a kingdom is;"

and then the anxious glance towards my father—the very

yearning, as it were, of powerless affection.

The sheriff had ceased his instructions, and now looked a little uncomfortable—perhaps fearing that his employers would not approve of the replevin; and Mr. Howard after a moment's rush of feeling that prompted him to throw the whole party out of the window, schooled himself and sat down-between the mice and the rattlesnakes.

"Well! Mr. Cross," said Mr. Mulhawl with the air of an injured man, "I suppose now you're going on with this

business."

Mr. Cross looked at my father and then at him, keeping his eyelids down however as if he didn't mean to be detected.

"Well no," he said; "I guess it'll have to be put offthere's a replevin brought."

"A replevin!" the coadjutors looked at each other, and

then began a muttered consultation.

"I s'pose we may as well go ahead with our work," said Mr. Boggs in the green jacket; "that's got to be done anyhow."

"Are the sureties found?" inquired Mr. Mulhawl suddenly.

"Not yet—there'll have to be time giv' for that."

"Of course!" said Mr. Self, who "did" the benign for the whole trio. "This is a beautiful place sir."

"Yes-it's a nice place enough-if it were let alone," re-

plied my father concisely.

"I am quite glad to have an opportunity of seeing it," pursued Mr. Self,—"I didn't know that anything would ever bring me this way. Very fine minerals Mr. Howard, - of your own collecting?"

I looked at the man—what did he mean by thus commenting on the things he was trying to rob us of?—nothing I verily believe but kindness. He felt uncomfortable and saw we did, and from mere want of skill he pressed upon the thorn he wished to make us forget. But his look was very different from that of Mr. Mulhawl; who now sat savagely leaning back in his chair, surveying the room and us as one of the aforesaid rattlesnakes might do an escaped mouse—his face a compound of the sour and hard.

"They'll want some one to go round and show 'em the things," said the sheriff with a reference of his elbow to the

appraisers.

Kate laid down her work.

"I will go with them papa—I showed the furniture to Mr. Cross when the levy was made, and I know just what is on the list."

"No daughter," he said, "I will go myself."

"You could not do it so easily papa;" and with a whispered word or two that brought her cheek very near his, she passed on to the other end of the room; while even Mr. Mulhawl drew up his foot out of her way and Mr. Self had nearly risen from his seat; and the posse looked shy when she turned to them and said,

"I will show you the things now."

And leading the way with as much composure as if they had been invited guests, she pointed out the cabinet of shells to their inspection, and stood waiting their readiness to go further; but her eye had gone out of the window then, to the fair blue sky beyond; and her thoughts were very far from the unscientific debate at her elbow.

"I should like to have a copy of that list," said my father. "Here—if you'll lend me yours Mr. Cross, I'll make one

myself."

"I ha'n't got a copy," said the sheriff, "without it's this on the warrant—but I guess you can have that, if you won't

be long."

My father drew his chair to the table, compressing his lips as if to keep down the inward disturbance, and began to write—it was no use. That list, of all our favourite possessions, of almost all our needful furniture;—and there, with those people who had so ruthlessly injured him watch-

ing every movement,—with us there too, surrounded by such rough intruders—self-command failed for once,—the trembling hand refused to do its office.

"I can not do it"—he said, throwing down the pen.

That was my grief of the morning. I dared not look at mamma and Kate, but I stood by him and said,

"I will do it papa."

"What?" he said, looking up at me with an expression of face I can never forget.

"I will copy that list."

"No dear-it doesn't matter-don't trouble yourself."

"I would rather do it papa."

And drawing the papers from under his hand, I carried them to my corner. It was well clear eyesight was not needed. But the words were familiar—I wrote on in a dream.

1 Turkey carpet-

2 blue damask easy-chairs-

1 lady's cabinet desk-

1 case of minerals—&c.—&c.—&c.—

At another time it would have moved me;—now I thought but of the conquered fortitude which I had believed unconquerable. I could have borne anything else better. Mamma had left the room, and the loudest sound there, was the muttering of the appraisers. I could just hear.

"Hum—about a dollar I reckon—I wouldn't give more for it—'twon't fetch more. What's in that glass box Mr. Pelton?"

"Some sort of money to look at, I guess—house is full of notions," said Mr. Pelton confidingly, as he made the acquaintance of William the Conqueror on a silver penny,—"be worth a sight if they was all liberty caps, but crowned heads don't go down in America."

"The box is handsome though—I guess it might be good

for five dollars."

Writing and weeping and listening all together—my fingers trembling with their own haste. But the listening brought some encouragement, for the smaller the appraised value, the easier it would be to get sureties,—so my father had said. He sat just where I had left him, his head lean-

ing on his hand. A bright thought struck me—perhaps a brace for the body might reach the mind. I went up to him.

"Papa," I said softly, "won't you come into the kitchen for a minute?"

And selecting the best-looking of the two eggs that yet remained in the basket, I gave it him in some milk. He thanked me with another of those touching looks, and we returned to the other room,—I certainly feeling refreshed.

A new knock at the door announced Mr. Phibbs, who had come down to prevent mistakes, and now discussed statutes and sureties quite as fast as Mr. Cross could follow him. Very soon the three associates got up and left the house, thinking perhaps that they could talk more freely in the open air; and Mr. Phibbs and the sheriff went back and forth between them and my father, to settle statute limitations and other unintelligible matters.

Meantime the appraisement proceeded slowly. If money "to look at" was of uncertain value, how much more the unrefined ore! and so much time was spent in hand-weighing lumps of iron and grains of platina, and in smelling the unsavoury specimens of sulphur, and wondering at the numberless shapes and colours of unknown minerals, that I began to think business had merged itself in amusement. Then came sofa and tables, and then Kate pushing aside a large easy-chair brought the appraisers face to face with Hebe.

"The fathers!" ejaculated Mr. Pelton—"who's that?

'tain't Martha Washington is it?"

Mr. Boggs shook his head dubiously and glanced towards Kate as if inclined to ask in his turn, but she gave no encouragement.

"It don't look much like the Gineral," he said with a

critical air-"I don't know as that makes any odds."

"A man and his wife is very often different," remarked Mr. Pelton.

"'Tain't set down so in the paper," said his companion consulting the inventory—"I guess it's something else,—she had chink enough to buy shoes with I know."

"Well what'll it fetch?" said Mr. Pelton.

"Something short of a fortin I guess," said Mr. Boggs facetiously,—"I don' know but I'd give three dollars for't—maybe a little more if I knowed who it was."

"I wouldn't," said Mr. Pelton,—"the figur o' nobody wouldn't be worth that to me—if it warn't Lot's wife; and

I don't say I'd give it for her."

It was as hard a matter to value the books. Homer "looked wonderful but they guessed nobody'd buy it," and Locke and Virgil "wouldn't pay no how,"—the articles were fairly beyond their comprehension, and the ignorance of the appraisers did us better service than they were aware of. By the time Kate had taken them upstairs to try their ingenuity upon beds and bureaus, I had finished my copying, and my father and Mr. Cross took the lists to compare them. I thought I heard a sound as of some one in the kitchen, and knowing that Caddie had gone of an errand, I went to see who it might be. No less a person than Mr. Jenkinson, who wishing to soothe his surliness with a cigar had even entered the house uninvited, in search of the kitchen fire. I supplied him with a match, and shut and bolted the door after him with much satisfaction.

We thought the day's work would end with the appraisement—not so. When all were gone but Mr. Phibbs and the sheriff, these two came again into the house to talk over the list with my father, and to strike out all the statute exemptions,—the levy had been very indiscriminate. To some things we were entitled by name, and then to such other things as we should choose, up to a certain amount. How disagreeable it was! What should we keep? for if my father failed to get sureties, all the rest must go. Kate and I carried the copy list upstairs to Mrs. Howard, and then went back and forth with her decisions and suggestions. It was hard choosing,—hard weighing books against silver, difficult to tell what combination would outweigh our Hebe; and yet the three dollars she stood for, would keep our sitting-room carpet; and the Musée Français must yield to silver forks. For when we said,

"O mamma! wouldn't you much rather have this?"

Mrs. Howard would reply,

"But how can we do without that?"

The choice was made, the amount deducted from the

total, and that sum of dollars and cents which was to test some of our friends stood there in black and white. Large enough—with only this comfort, that it might have been larger. And at last, late in the afternoon, our house was cleared of intruders; and when it had undergone sundry

purifying processes, we sat down to dinner.

For a week my father was away, seeking sureties; and he came home having succeeded indeed, but by the hardest. One couldn't and another wouldn't,—rich friend after rich friend had refused, though Mr. Howard offered them security; and he had well nigh despaired; when two that were friends indeed gave their names, and in a way that was not the least part of the kindness. As Kate said, "It was a blessed thing all the world were not like some of it."

The proposed sale had only been adjourned, to see if the sureties could be obtained; but by some delay or mistake the issue was not made known to Mr. Mulhawl, and the sheriff did not hear of it till the day of adjournment. Then he came over to the Glen to prevent further difficulty.

Mr. Howard was from home, but we were able to give the sheriff all necessary proof that the business was really settled, and he left the house remarking that he would stay about for a while, lest some one should come. This put us upon the lookout.

Again the wand gave its ten taps, and there—yes, it was Jenkinson, Self, and Mulhawl who came walking through

the woods from the turnpike.

"I declare they shall not come in!" said Kate, "unless they've a mind to break the house down!—there's no tell-

ing what they may choose to believe."

And with most eager haste we ran to turn every key and draw every bolt; for though we knew the matter was all arranged, it was impossible to know what such people might attempt. They chose to believe the truth however, though they walked and talked for a long time as if it went hard with them. Once the sheriff came to the house, and was honoured with a window audience; and at last they all adjourned sine die,—leaving us with a partiality for shut doors that did not go off for months.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I had a dream—which was not all a dream.

Byron.

BY the time we had fairly talked out on the Self and Mulhawl subject it was time to have dinner; and while that was in progress Mr. Howard came in and surprised us most pleasantly. Then there was another long talk, finished off by a question from Kate as to whether "any one else could do anything;" and the somewhat dubious reply from my father that "he hoped not."

"Are you very tired?" said Mrs. Howard.

"I?—a little, not much."
"Too much for a walk?"

"Not a bit-where do you want to go?"

"They say Mrs. Barrington is not well, and I thought I should like to see her."

"Get ready then," said my father,—"I want to see Ezra

too, and the walk will rest me."

"Mamma," said Kate just as they were setting out, "Grace and I thought of going to the Bird's Nest—do you

think we may without you?"

"Better not," said Mrs. Howard,—"I don't like to have you take that walk alone. I believe these disturbances have made me nervous. And I am sure you are both tired—Grace looks more like going to bed than anything else,—you had better rest this afternoon."

"But don't you rest too long here," said my father, "if you want to see Mrs. Barrington by daylight. Of course they think what you do about it—one word is as good as a

dozen. Come!" and my stepmother hurried off.

"Why you poor child!" said Kate coming up to me and taking my face in her hands, "how tired you are to be

sure! Did those people trouble you so much this morning?"

"No-not so very much,-I was a little excited, and

that tires one, you know Katie."

"Lie down here on the sofa and sleep—it's the best thing you can do. Mr. Boggs knew very little of the comfort of sofas, or he would have put a higher price upon ours."

So I lay down, and Kate covered me up; and for some time I watched her as she sat on a low seat reading, with the afternoon sun glancing across her head—her only extrinsic ornament. Yet to my mind, the calico frock and white collar set off the graceful, high-bred turn of head and throat to sufficient advantage; and in the face there was all the sweetness that little Paul found in his sister's music—"it was too dear to him." Whoever has not seen that, knows little yet about beauty. I studied every line and outline,—giving Self and Mulhawl credit for the rather pale cheek, and assigning the slight compression of lip to the long course of our difficulties; and I was busy finding a cause for the somewhat sad and patient droop of the eyelashes, when I fell asleep to go them all over again in a dream.

The sun had long left the horizon when I awoke, and in its place the firelight shone darkly upon Kate as she knelt before me.

"Gracie," she said, "are you quite determined not to wake up? you have not your usual regard for my words and kisses."

"I didn't feel them Katie.—Have papa and mamma come back?"

"Just-and gone upstairs to make ready for tea."

"Well—I must go too. O Katie!—I have had such a dream!—have you been asleep?"

" No."

"You were so pale when I lay down—and now this cheek looks flushed. O stay quiet till I tell you my dream—I thought those people had come again and had taken away everything there was in the house—every single thing,—and I was so happy!"

"That was rather odd," said Kate smiling.

"No, but you haven't heard it all—it wasn't odd a bit. I thought I had watched this sofa go off, last of all, and then I came in here and you were sitting by the fire just as I saw you before I went to sleep, and I felt quite happy in a minute; and I came up to you and said—not to you but to somebody else, Mr. Rodney, I think—that I didn't care one bit about all that had gone, for I had you still and that was enough."

"My dear Gracie!" said Kate as she laid her cheek against mine—" what put such a dream into your head,

love?"

"I'm sure I don't know—unless it was watching you as I did when I first lay down,—O yes it was Mr. Rodney—I remember—he looked just as he did when I asked him about the channels at Bermuda. But you don't seem to like my dream?"

"There is no particular need of your losing everything,

even in imagination, dear Gracie," she said.

"I sha'n't let you get up.—It was only a dream you know—what are you thinking of? and what makes you speak in that way? you don't talk like yourself, Katie. Are those tears in your eyes?"

"There will be, if you look at me so,—at present you

may suppose that it is a gleam of the firelight."

"Ah I am not asleep now to suppose any such thing—I'm in the full possession of all my senses Miss Kate," I said, stroking back her hair.

"What if you were to bring some of them to bear upon me?" said somebody who stood at the head of the sofa,

while a hand gently touched my forehead.

"Mr. Rodney!"—I exclaimed, starting up,—"is that you?

O I am very glad to see you sir, indeed!"

"Thank you dear Gracie," he answered, "I am very glad to see you."

"But where did you come from?—how came you

here?"

"I came from the other side of the fireplace-whence I

walked leisurely to the head of your sofa."

"You are a most unaccountable person at that rate, sir," I said laughing. "And I suppose you will not say how long you have been here?"

"I don't believe I could," he said with a smile,-"except

that I came while you were asleep."

"And I must have heard your voice and worked it into my dream!—how strange! I wonder—didn't you stand by the mantelpiece?"

"All this time? not quite."

"I shouldn't wonder if I had seen you too—I dare say I did!"

"And I dare say you didn't,—" said Mr. Rodney laughing. "You have been remarkably fast asleep; and if you had beheld so unwonted a vision even through 'a half shut eye' Gracie, I think you would have waked up immediately."

"No, I should have thought it was too pleasant a dream to wake up from. But I thought we were not to see you in a great while again, sir,—how did you manage it?".

"Didn't you tell me I 'must come'? and 'must always

can' you know."

"Have you any idea how your hair looks, little dormouse?" said my father as he came up to us.

"A faint one papa-I am going to arrange it."

"Tell your mother that we should like to have tea some time in the course of the evening," said Mr. Howard,—" but it's of no use to hurry a lady—ever. Katie, suppose you try if you can hurry an Irishwoman,—I am really tired, and want some tea, and so does Mr. Rodney I'm sure."

See the inconsistency of men! my father had wanted his tea very much and yet wouldn't come when it was ready. Mrs. Howard put the sugar in the cups, and stirred up the cream, and leaned back in her chair; and then leaned forward to look into the teapot and make sure there was water enough; and then despatched a messenger. Which of course made my father come—just when he would without it.

"I thought you were in such a hurry!" said Mrs. How-

ard, "and here have we waited this ever so long."

"Bless me!" said my father—" well, I was in a hurry, but did you never hear of such a thing as 'waiting till your hurry is over'?"

"And Grace has been three times to call you."

"Very well my dear, I couldn't help that—I'm sure I didn't want her to come. Sit down Mr. Rodney. I am

sorry if I have kept you too long from your tea, sir, but I make no doubt it will do you the more good,—there's nothing like having an edge to one's comfort."

"If ye plase ma'am," said Caddie coming in, "here's Mr.

Laross."

"Who's Mr. Laross?" said my father.

"Meself doesn't know sir-it's from the Moon he is."

"I wish he'd stayed there" said Mr. Howard knitting his brows. "However—' the Man in the Moon came down too soon' when I was a boy, and I suppose he'll always keep it up."

"What are you talking about!" said Mrs. Howard,—
"do pray be quiet! It is Mr. La Roche—don't you remember Kate Mrs. Willet said he should bring back your

book ?"

"Will I fetch him in ma'am? or say you's at tea?" said Caddie.

"May as well do both," said my father.

"Tell him we are at tea and shall be very glad of his company," said my stepmother. "Why Mr. Howard what

are you thinking of! are you crazy?"

"I've enough sense left to meet the common emergencies of life my dear,—further than that I won't answer. My head is full enough of thoughts in all conscience. But you know I couldn't have sent such a message—I haven't a waistcoat of benignity that I put on under my best coat when the door-bell rings."

"What an insinuation!" said Mrs. Howard.

"No, no," said my father laughing—"I have the most implicit trust in your benevolence,—I verily believe you would be glad to have your worst enemy come in and sit down to tea, though you do sometimes keep me waiting for mine; but I never reached that point—I keep my love and friendship in my pocket, and take 'em out when I see occasion."

"And did you never have your pocket picked by the

means, papa?" said Kate laughing.

"I have heard of such things happening to other people," said my father. "Singular mood we are all in to-night—Mrs. Howard talkative, Mr. Rodney meditative, Kate speculative, and Grace sportive—if one may judge by her

face. Just move down and take that next seat Gracie,

opposite your sister."

"Mr. Howard is queer I think," said my stepmother,—
"why are you discomposing everything, and congregating

all the gentlemen at your end of the table?"

"Most composing thing I can think of," replied my father with the utmost gravity, while the lines of Mr. Collingwood's mouth told of some amusement. "Good evening Mr. La Roche—I began to suppose you had absconded. Did you lose your way in the hall?"

"Lost my way in the Irish tongue, that's all sir," said Mr. La Roche, "and couldn't make out what road I was to follow. Miss Howard, I have the honour of returning your

Macaulay, new-bound in thanks."

"That's a kind of morocco that doesn't wear," said my

father.

"What did Caddie tell you?" said Mrs. Howard, after a glance of entreaty at my father; while the new comer laid

the book on a side-table behind Kate.

"'A thrifle' of contradictions," said Mr. La Roche laughing. "It was at ta ye was,' ma'am—that is, 'not at ta at all at all, but at the table,—and there was other company—and the family was late,—and would I come in or no.' So at last I determined to come and see what the message really was."

"That we are at tea and would be glad of your com-

pany," said Mrs. Howard.

"I had been so strictly charged to entrust the book only to Miss Howard's fair hand," said Mr. La Roche, who seemed in no hurry to quit his stand by the tea-board, "that I felt justified in acting upon uncertain information."

"And you think you have obeyed?" said Mr. Howard,—

"that's what I call a free translation."

"But sir," said the gentleman laughing, "if you will please to recollect—circumstances alter cases—and the fair

hand was not altogether within reach."

"Occupied with bread and butter, in fact," said my father.
"Well Mr. La Roche, if you will come round and take this seat, I will supply your hands in like manner. You are acquainted with Mr. Collingwood I believe."

"I have that pleasure—slightly," said Mr. La Roche

with some doubtfulness of expression. "By the way, Mr. Collingwood, I thought I had understood from Mr. Carvill that you were—I forget where—"

"Such being the case I can neither confirm nor deny his

statement," said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"No, but I mean-not here."

"Apparently he acted upon uncertain information too,"

said my father coolly.

If Mr. La Roche knew little of Mr. Howard before, he had a fair chance that evening to improve his acquaintance. My father kept him engaged, in a way that made Mrs. Howard more than once look up from her work in a kind of wonder; and though Mr. La Roche would perhaps have chosen to fix the centre of conversation among the ladies, he could neither break away from the gentlemen nor tell precisely why he didn't. At length nine o'clock came and he went; and as the door closed my father left his seat and went through a most energetic arrangement of the fire.

"I wonder what you call 'benignity'!" said Mrs. Howard.
"So do I—I haven't an idea that such a quality exists upon earth," said my father pounding down the sticks of wood.

"Don't you remember papa," said I laughing, "how you once said you didn't like Mr. La Roche? and how Kate

said there might be good things in him?"

"Very likely," said my father replacing the tongs, "but I presume Kate has found out by this time that my first estimate of people is quite as apt to be right as hers. Haven't you daughter?" he added with a smile as he bent down and kissed her.

I thought she looked a little troubled—I could not imag-

ine why.

"But don't let us talk of Mr. La Roche," said my father presently—"if we once begin we shall all 'give tongue' as your brother would say, Mr. Rodney; and I would rather think of something else. Come, put up your needles and let us look at each other,—this gentleman is puzzling himself as I do sometimes, with a vain attempt to understand embroidery—or why ladies will work at it."

"I can understand the working of some things we'll enough, sir," said Mr. Rodney with a very unpuzzled smile.

Mr. Howard smiled too, but enforced his injunction.

"Fold it up Katie, and sing-that will put us all in good

humour,—give us some of Miss Easy's favourites."

"Come sing with me Gracie," Kate said. And so dwelling for a while upon what was indeed never long out of mind, we did forget—not only Mr. La Roche, but all the weariness and vexation of that day and week.

We must have been in good humour, for we sat talking most pleasantly and happily until a late bed-time. But the next morning Mr. Collingwood went away and we were

alone again.

CHAPTER XXX.

Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer, An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger; But, how it comes I never ken'd yet, They're maistly wonderfu' contented.

BURNS

"CAN you take a stitch in these gloves?" said my father, holding up a pair of which every individual finger was tulip-shaped.

"Yes papa," said Kate laying down a shirt-collar and exchanging her needleful of thread for one of silk. "Well I

do think !- that is what gentlemen call 'a stitch'!"

"And I should like to have this cravat cut in two—it's so thick and clumsy," said Mr. Howard, pulling uneasily at the one he had on as if he still felt the other round his neck.

"Do you want it to-day papa?" said I. "If you can—it don't much matter."

"I'll hem it right away."

My father went upstairs, and when he again passed through the room on his way out, it was to throw a pair of pantaloons on the sofa, with the remark that they wanted "a button or two."

"They are hardly worth putting buttons on," said Mrs. Howard. "How shall I ever get him some pantaloons

made if he don't get me the stuff!"

Kate sat leaning forward with the tulip fingers abstractedly piercing the air.

"Mamma, how do you suppose we are to get on?"

"I am as much puzzled as you are, Katie."

"What if I were to get a place as governess somewhere?"

"Then nobody would let you take it," said Mrs. Howard smiling—"I'm sure I wouldn't. I will never consent to your leaving home in that capacity."

"And I will never consent to it in any. Why Kate! what would become of me? I will not let you go—so you needn't think of it."

She smiled at me, and then with a half sigh went on.

"What can we do mamma? I am not disposed to let this state of things continue if it can be mended,—we might copy maps—I know I could do that nicely."

"And so could I—and law papers mamma."

"But my dear children," said Mrs. Howard, "you cannot

bear up the house on your shoulders."

"No mamma, but it would be a great comfort to earn something. Just now in the mild weather we can manage, but will you inform me how we should get the needful things if it were fall instead of spring?"

Mrs. Howard sewed on her buttons in silence. "Don't you think we had better try mamma?"

"You might copy," said my stepmother,—"I could do it too, at odd times, and as you say it would be a comfort. But I don't like to have you spend your time in such a way."

"Better than spending it in this way," said Kate again displaying the glove—"and we need not do it too steadily,—

it can't harm us if we take exercise enough."

"And we are not troubled with interruptions," I said— "there is nothing to hinder us."

"It is so strange!" said Kate. "Why mamma we are

worth just as much as when we were rich."

"More, Katie-but people look little further than the

purse,-most people."

"And some that know us so well—if they were strangers it would be less wonder. Mrs. Suydam has not been here this spring—to be sure she is not very well—and neither has Mrs. Egerton; and Mrs. Willet came but once in all the last year; and I don't believe," said Kate laughing, "that Mrs. De Camp recollects where we live."

"Your father talks of taking two or three pupils into the house,—how would you like that?" said Mrs. Howard.

I dropped the cravat and Kate paused with uplifted needle, and we both declared it would be "dismal!"

"He doesn't really mean to, mamma?"

"I hope so-I have advised it."

"You have mamma! advised it!"

"Not as a pleasant thing Katie, but as better than nothing. Your father is not quite decided about it—he would prefer a Greek class at the Moon if it could be got together—but if not, this seems the alternative. It would be far pleasanter than taking boarders."

"I never would do that," said Kate—"I had rather be a governess and have the comfort of thinking that the rest

of you were enjoying yourselves."

"That's a pleasant little delusion of yours," said I laugh-

"But can't papa sell some of those cottages?"

"Being a poor man, no,—at least it seems not. He means to pay off Mr. McLoon with a part of them, if he can; and then try if we cannot start fair with the world once more."

"And does he owe nothing except to Mr. McLoon?"

"I don't know,—that Van Wart business can be settled I hope, but it seems to me I have heard some other debt spoken of."

And laying down her work Mrs. Howard rested her head

on her hand in an attitude of rather sad thoughtfulness.

"But my dear mamma," said Kate, "how many pupils do you suppose it would take to support us?—and this

house won't hold quite all the rising generation."

"Not quite. Your father says he wouldn't attempt to manage more than two (I'm sure the managing will come on my hands) but though that would not bring us a great deal it would be something certain,—much better than larger uncertainties. And there's another reason for this plan—if we have only Andy about the place your father ought to be at home."

"Then he will get these same pupils at once I suppose?"

"While he is away this time, if he can. And by the by Gracie, take a pencil and make out a list of the things we want for the house."

In former years our lists for my father had run thus:

Box of candles-

do do tea—

do do raisins-

do do herring-

bag of coffee barrel of sugar— ½ bbl. mackerel—&c., &c.

Now we said,

"Papa I have put down tea for we are near out, and if you could bring us a few herring or half a dozen mackerel, we should like it,"—or "Papa, could you get us a pound of raisins? we wanted to make some cake for Kate's birthday,—but if it is not convenient, never mind. See papa, I have marked the things we must have, so."

And then when Mr. Howard came home he would say,

producing a paper of tea from his trunk,-

"I got your raisins my dear, but I didn't bring the fish after all, for I hadn't money enough—I was promised some more but couldn't get it. And for the same reason Kate I did not bring your shoes."

And we, feeling more for his disappointment than our

own, would answer,

"O it don't matter papa,—another time will do just as well."

So much did we look at each other's trouble that we forgot to look at our own. How often did we pass lightly over a real want because my father had been grieved at

his failure to supply it.

Incomprehensible we were to other people. On one occasion Mrs. Willet happened to be with us when my father arrived; and as without unpacking his trunk he gave us a few trifles that lay on top, she sat and listened to our remarks. At length hearing me say,

"O thank you papa! how good of you to remember it! I am very much obliged to you." Mrs. Willet fairly turned

round and said,

"Why what is it?"

"Only this belt for my frock ma'am—I hadn't put it on

papa's list, and I didn't think he would get it."

"O—" said Mrs. Willet turning back again, with such an air and tone as she might have used had the article in question been a pin.

Ah one has need to do without things, and to wait, and to have hard work to get them, to know their value! Mrs. Willet could not understand how the spending of a few

shillings could ever raise a doubt—(the spending them upon oneself) nor how the many other calls for those very shillings, should make my father's remembering my belt a matter of gratitude; that stirred my heart as the gift of thousands could not. I believe I have had more pleasure from small things than I ever had from great; and have worn a pair of gloves with an appreciation that no rich person ever got at.

"It is absurd to be buying hard soap at the rate we do," said Mrs. Howard. "I give away fat enough every year to make as much soft soap as we could use in the kitchen; and it's better than the hard for it's not so easily wasted. So if you'll put up a leach Mr. Howard, you needn't get

any more common soap."

"It's as easy got as uncommon soap I fancy," said my

father; "but what sort of a leach do you want?"

"What sort of a leach?—I'm sure I don't know. How many sorts are there?"

"Well how large a one then ?—will a barrel do?"

"O yes,—but you know there must be an opening at the

bottom for the ley to run out."

"I guess the ley would be stronger if you let it stay in among the ashes," remarked Mr. Howard. "Well—I suppose I can conjure up something of the sort, by the help of Andy and the cultivator and my own recollection—though I haven't seen such a thing since I was a boy."

The leach was made, and the ley came forth-but

wasn't strong enough.

"We have burned so little hard wood this spring," said my stepmother,—"that must be the reason—there are too many pine ashes."

"Very likely," said my father.

"You'll have to get me some potash."

So the potash was got and put into the soap-kettle,—still the soap wouldn't "come."

"It must want more fat," said Mrs. Howard,—and fat

was added,-more unsoapy than ever.

"It must want more potash."

"Well how much this time?" said my father. "When I got the last you said 'dear me! that's a great deal too

much,'—this potash is like to be the carpenter's door. Will you have one pound, or two, or three, or twenty?"

"No, no-twenty! why what are you thinking of! two

will be an abundance."

But my father brought half a dozen pounds,—still no success,—the soap was only "all but" as the country people say. It was boiled and cooled, and reboiled and recooled.

"There must be enough potash," said Mrs. Howard, "for I can feel an undissolved lump at the bottom of the kettle."

"Maybe there's too much, mamma."
"No—that lump can't do any harm."
Finally we sent for Mrs. Barrington.

"Now what is the matter with it?" said my stepmother. "I've done everything to it that I can think of, and it will

not grow thick."

"Well of all things!" said Mrs. Barrington. And taking the soap-stick she stirred the half ropy, half slimy, half brown, half yellow contents of the kettle, which looked

anything but amalgamated or at ease.

"I guess it's all done but finishin'," remarked our referee; and to attain that desirable point she tried what seemed like a doubtful experiment—the addition of sundry pails of cold water. But strange to say, the more she poured in the thicker grew the mixture; until at length Mrs. Barrington declared "she never see soap look prettier," and the great business was done.

"I told you there wasn't enough of something," said

Mr. Howard when the news was detailed to him.

"But you didn't tell me what."

"Of course—if I had been making the soap I suppose I should have found out."

"Now papa!" said Kate, "you never would have thought that adding water to that thin soap would make it thicker."

"I should have made the discovery then; for I should have added everything there was in the house, by turns, rather than wait six days for the soap to 'come' as you call it. I told you common soap was as easy to get as uncommon."

"It's not so easy to pay for, if that is what you mean

by uncommon," said Mrs. Howard; and my father having

the worst of the argument made no reply.

We were most disagreeably surprised that afternoon by a visit from Mr. Pegraph, who having unfortunately found a place in Caddie's category of gentlemen, was ushered into our presence without hesitation. What he had come for nobody could imagine, unless to get a night's lodging: why he came seemed to be because he was a little out of his head. He made a great show of asking my father's advice about some business matters of his own, talking coherently enough, but with a degree of diffusiveness and an occasional trip of the tongue that told of the enemy's progress; and while Mr. Howard answered every question clearly and briefly, his look would have silenced a sober man, and he resolutely refrained from giving the desired invitation. Mr. Pegraph had sense enough left not to ask it; and having said what he wanted to say about half a dozen times, he demanded a guide to the stage-office. My father immediately went in search of Andy, and once relieved of his presence Mr. Pegraph laid aside the small remnant of his discretion.

"I'm ex-tremely glad t' come here again," he said.

We made no reply.

"I've been so 'fused 'bout this business—and I just knew he'd set 't right,—so h' has—what h' says must be right. There ain't 'nother man living I trust."

"You may safely trust him," said my stepmother

quietly.

"So I say—I say I pin my faith to Jem Howard,—if he fails I've lost my sheet anchor, and drift 'bout—nowhere. But h' can't fail—Jem Howard's the man f'r me."

Self-command was all we could attempt.

"I say I pin my faith to Jem Howard—and trust, and c'nfid'nee, and all that sort 'thing.—I don't bow t' an'thing but 'lectual s'perior'ty—I'm free 'nd independant. Why not?" proceeded Mr. Pegraph in a louder tone; while we looked out of the window and wished most devoutly that intellectual superiority would come.

"What d'ye think I ever came here for, Miss Howard?"

said Mr. Pegraph after intently eyeing the carpet.

Kate replied with some difficulty that "she really could not tell."

"No, I guess not—you thought 'came t' do service t' your father—so 'did,—but that wa'n't all, nor the most, nor beg'nning to be the most. I did do him service—good service—'s well 's I knew how—and how have I been paid? I never 'spected it of Jem Howard. I' came f'r something else—and I've been dis'pointed! Now Miss Howard you ought to know—'ll tell you what I came for—don't mind telling you. What 'd I come for? was't money? I don't say anything 'bout that—I might 've taken it—and 'might not—what 'wanted was'—

We never shall know what—for at this interesting point my father entered the room, and said that Andy was in waiting. And quitting his chair as if it were like the Irishman's bottle, "a friend that would stand by him when he couldn't stand by himself," Mr. Pegraph made a happy

guess at the doorway and disappeared.

"I'm afraid we have done wrong to let him go," said Mrs. Howard, her pity getting the upper hand both of disgust and amusement,—"I am sure he did not feel fit to walk."

"And I am sure he wasn't fit to stay here," said my father, with a most unqualified expression of face.

"But if any accident should happen—if he should fall

into the lake-"

"A cold bath would do him good. You need not concern yourself—he can't find a mud-puddle between here and Ethan."

But Mr. Pegraph was not to see Ethan that night, for as Andy afterwards declared, he walked so slow, and sat down so often to rest, that they had not gone half the way when the stage passed them by a cross road.

We had done tea, and the twilight was near ending, when Caddie burst into the room with a face of the most

ecstatic delight.

"The crathur's come back agin!"

"What, not that man?" said my father.

"Troth and he is sir, and half luny—or pretty far down, any way. And it's Andy that can't walk up for laughing!"

And out she rushed to see more of the fun.

"I shall send him off to Wiamce," said Mr. Howard

moving towards the door.

"At this time of night! O no—he never could get there!" said my stepmother. "Let him stay here—it will soon be bed-time."

A little hesitating rap repeated her petition. My father held a moment's debate with his good-nature, and then

opened the door and admitted Mr. Pegraph.

He was a pitiable sight; and his first look, half apology and half shame, would have moved any human nature that had ever understood the question, "Who maketh thee to differ?"

He had not drunk enough to stupefy him—there seemed to be a half consciousness of his condition, and a desperate effort to overcome it and talk straight. In vain,—the poison held its sceptre with a strengthening hand. When Mr. Pegraph first appeared in the afternoon, we had noticed nothing but a little oddity that might have been derangement instead of intoxication,—then had come the random talk; and now, with it and most pitiable of all, the random smiles.

"Hard at work!" he said looking at us,—"sew a great deal! So d's my wife—she works too. You know I'm a married man Mr. Howard?"

My father assented, but the question had thrilled to the heart of every woman there. To see any man tipsy was bad enough, but a married man!—alas for his wife!"

"Yes," he went on, "I'm just married—four months 'guess—got 'firstrate wife Mr. Howard. And why d' I let her sew? I say she sews a great deal—for why?—I'm a poor man. But we'll get on—'hope t' see her in a carriage yet—and then if she takes 'needle f'r anything 'cept pleasure, there'll be trouble in the wigwam." And Mr. Pegraph shook his head with quite a fierce air, and then subsided into a smile as ridiculous as possible.

"Have you been to tea?" said my father.

"No-th'nk you-Mr.-Howard,-don't want any-never care f'r tea when c'n get dinner."

"Do you ever drink milk Mr. Pegraph?" said Kate, with a sudden recollection of that antidote for alcohol.

"Very fond of 't Miss Howard—like 't better th'n anything."

Kate hastily went for some, and he drank it with a look

that seemed benignly aware of her intention.

"I think 't's more—wh'lsm than water," he remarked—"always take 't in town."

By degrees he grew silent and sleepy, and was ushered upstairs by my father, who went afterwards to bring away the light and make sure that it had done no mischief.

Mr. Pegraph was sobered by breakfast-time, but either stupid or ashamed, for he ventured to say very little. But when he was going away he confided to my father that "he hadn't been well the day before, and had allowed himself to be persuaded to take some soda water—which he never drank,—and that there must have been something in it, for it had disagreed with him."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Grete rest standeth in litil businesse.

CHAUCER.

THE pupil plan was carried into effect; and on the first of June Mr. Howard brought home with him two youngsters, of that pleasant age when a boy is nothing par-

ticular except a plague.

I do not mean that Archie and Candlish were exactly plagues: they were perhaps better disposed than most of their species, but yet shared its essential properties,—an incomprehensible love of noise, a perfect contempt for order, and a quick wit at devising mischief that baffled all power of calculation. Archie, the oldest, was rather reserved and quiet within doors, and by no means so interesting a boy as his brother; but Candlish was very quicksilver for brightness and power of locomotion. But in his little thermometer the mercury never went down—it seemed rising indefinitely,—even a dash of cold-water reproof gave but a momentary check. Fortunately for us they were not disposed to be homesick; and it was likewise fortunate that the one who needed most reining, was also the most tendermouthed.

We saw them come with some trepidation,—I should say, heard them; for their quick footsteps, so different from my father's steady pace, first told us that he came not alone. I remember how we looked at each other and then at the door,—I remember how that glance said,

"It will be home no longer!"

But a woman can always find something to take hold of,
—her love is a very wild-flower, that will grow in the
crevices of the roughest rocks, and even there send down
a root that the wind cannot dislodge nor the drought wither

And for these poor children—if they hurt the comfort of our home, they were away from their own;—and that touched us.

They were not slow to find it out. The somewhat eager eye with which Candlish had first looked up at us, became singularly trustful; and before the evening was over he was on my stepmother's lap, as in a very sure and tried resting-place; while Archie detailed to Kate and me some intricate fishing operations in which he had lately been engaged, with no doubt of our sympathy. And so the first hours passed off, and the little strangers went to bed looking as well satisfied as if they had known us always; while with very different feelings we remained to talk over our own prospects.

It was no part of Mr. Howard's plan that he should oversee his pupils, except just when they were in his study,—my stepmother was quite right about the managing. So much of his time as was needed to the perfect learning and understanding of their lessons, my father gave conscientiously, and kept the two boys as well up to the mark as he was himself; but the books once shut, so were his eyes and mind to the very existence of Candlish and Archie,—for the rest of the time they were rolled off upon us.

Often we were drawn in yet further. It was

"Miss Kate could you show me about this problem?"
Or, "Miss Grace, where is this word, for it isn't in the dictionary?"

And if we said, "Why don't you ask Mr. Howard?" the

answer was

"He looks so dreadfully busy."

This was the sprinkling of the shower of demands and questions which fell in full abundance after dinner.

"Where's my cap?"—"Who's got a pin?"

"Hi diddle diddle!
The cats and the fiddle!—"

"O Mrs. Howard! mayn't we go and turn hay with Ezra

Barrington?"

This last request always met with a prompt refusal—we did not choose that any of our family should intrude upon Mr. Carvill; but there were twenty other proposals standing

ready, and which could not be so easily disposed of. Kate and I walked and talked and listened till we were tired,—no such blessing ever befell the two boys. Mrs. Howard would certainly have dosed them with sleeping draughts, could her conscience have been silenced in like manner. The garden was a great help, and many a morning's accumulation of energy was worked off in an afternoon's weeding; but even that could not go on of itself. There never was such a locomotive as Candlish—he had delivered one train and was back for another before I had fairly collected my thoughts; and the first thing would be a most startling whistle at my back.

"O child! you mustn't make such a noise in the house!"
"I won't ever again Miss Grace. But what will I do

now?"

"And what will I do, if you talk to me in the parlour without uncovering?"

Down went the cap on the floor.

"But what's to be done? I've set out the lettuces, and they're all weeping for sympathy with the watering-pot; and now I'm wasting my 'waliable time,' as Sam Weller says."

"What do you know about Sam Weller?"

"Ah!" said Candlish.—"O Miss Grace—don't ever tell

Mr. Howard that I said 'waliable'!"

"Did you ever hear that old proverb," said Kate looking up, "which says, 'the way not to have a thing known of you is never to do it'?"

"Now Miss Kate! But isn't there anything for me to

do? Shall I help Andy to pick the 'dead paes'?"

"No, no, you let Andy alone. But Candlish! how can I do anything when you are shaking my chair at such a rate with your dancing?"

The feet stopped, and the hands continued the measure

on my shoulders.

"Have you watered the cauliflowers?"

"Some of 'em twice over, for fear I'd missed 'em."

"Then you may wheel off all those weeds that you pulled up yesterday."

And while Archie gambaded past the window with a

Candlish darted out, and slammed the door so hard that the flowers in my vase all nodded their heads.

Kate and I look at each other, and for a little while feel

stunned.

Another time I am painting, and both boys come rushing in with a fishing line in a puzzle.

"You never can get it out Miss Grace, but we thought

maybe you'd try."

"Wait a little then—I can't try till I have laid on this wash "

So to pass away the time Archie looks over me, exclaiming.

"Splen-did!—ex-quis-ite!—how can you paint so!"

And Candlish begins to sing,

"My name was Captain Kidd, As I sailed, as I sailed,— My name was Captain Kidd As I sailed. My name was Captain Kidd, And the law did forbid That so wickedly I did
As I sailed—as I sailed,— That so wickedly I did As I sailed."

"There—that will do," said my stepmother when she could be heard: "you can finish it out of doors."

"I must sing one more verse for you ma'am."
"No—I have had quite enough."

"Ah dear Mrs. Howard!" said Candlish-"just one more !- just this second verse,-it begins,

> "'I'd a bible in my hand As I sailed, as I sailed; I'd a——'"

But Kate laughingly stopped his mouth and declared he should not go on.

"Here is your line," said I.

"You can't untie it?"

"Yes-it's all straight; but the next time you bring me such a job, please to dry the line first. Look at my hands."

Candlish gave it as his opinion that I was "the most extraordinary girl he ever saw in his life," and they went off.

We paid dear for our popularity, for it having been once

discovered that "Miss Kate could explain everything, and that "Miss Grace knew where everything was," besides being a sort of conjuror in the way of knots and difficulties; all knots and difficulties whether physical or mental were brought home to us. Mr. Howard's dry answers made the boys rather shy of asking random questions in that quarter, so except during study hours (those which they spent directly with him) we were dictionaries and general referees. At the same time my father maintained a sufficiently strict censorship of English and manners, but in a way that often posed the objects of it.

We were out walking one afternoon, and the two boys had been excursionizing to their heart's content, when

Archie came up with,

"O Miss Kate! won't you run a race with me? I know

I could beat you to the bar-place."

"And I'm certain I should beat you if you did," said

my father gravely.

"Sir!—Mr. Howard!" said Archie with a very perceptible flush of astonishment. While Candlish presuming for his brother as he would hardly have done for himself, exclaimed,

"Why what do you mean sir?"

"Suppose you were to find out before expressing any opinion," said my father.

Our laugh told them, and they laughed too; but Archie

said,

"Now didn't you know what I meant Mr. Howard?"

"Yes,-just as I may know whither a half-made road will

lead me, but that don't make it pleasant walking."

The summer passed on, and the fall came in all its bright beauty, with its troop of associations,—perhaps no season has so many. And one after another told its tale.—That we had been children,—that we had been strangers at Glen Luna,—that we had found friends,—that with them we had seen year after year put on and put off its foliage,—that the last autumn winds had made a clean sweep, and we were alone again. Those very artemisias that made such fair show in Miss Easy's garden—the last time they had bloomed she had been there to look at them!

We could not but feel it all; and yet the feeling was

more quiet and grave than sorrowful. "The world passeth away, and the glory of it; but the word of our God shall stand forever."—That ought to be joy enough to gild faded hopes and changing prospects, even as does the sun of October its dying foliage.

And as we had now less to do with other people, so had we more love and interest for the few that with joined hands kept our little circle unbroken. The fountain of our affections had been shut in till it had grown deeper than I

liked to think of.

With what a rough hand does the world give advice and consolation!

Mrs. Willet had taken a sudden fancy during her last visit for the season, that I should go back to town with her. She urged the point a good deal, but I did not incline to go, —I could ill be spared at home, and felt quite sure that I should enjoy myself so much nowhere else. Of course all my reasons were not declared. When she was going away however, she would let no one follow her to the door but me, and there turned about to press her request still further.

Again I said no.

"But my dear Grace," said Mrs. Willet, "I know it's very natural for you to like to be at home, with your dear mother and sister and all that; but I don't think it's good for you—it's not well to grow too fond of one's friends,—you ought not to indulge yourself in it. The heart becomes so bound up in one little centre—it does not prepare one for life. And however we may cherish and value our friends, we cannot hinder the course of events—you know my dear you cannot hope to keep them always."

I stood silently holding the door in my hand, with that restless spring of love and tears roused from its momentary quiet by her last words—she might have said anything

else! Did I not know it ?--ah how well!

I attempted no reply, and Mrs. Willet guessing perhaps that she had said too much, tried to huddle up matters.

"Well, well, my dear—I didn't mean to trouble you,—but you know I should so much like to have you with me."

After such a reminder! she had taken away every pos-

sible inclination that I could have had. O no !-if I could

not keep them always, let me keep them now!

During the course of this fall our replevin business was settled, finally and satisfactorily. Moreover Mr. Howard had at last succeeded in arranging matters with Mr. McLoon about the property, of which a division had been made.— Mr. McLoon taking a certain portion for the amount of purchase money that was yet due. We were not quite clear of him, either, -there was a something-we could not exactly tell what-about which my father frequently went to consult Mr. Phibbs. It seems that Mr. McLoon had formerly held a mortgage upon some property belonging to my father, (worth twice all the encumbrances), and that he might the sooner get his money my father agreed to have the property sold. And at a time when Mr. Howard was away the lots were put up for sale, all in one parcel, and bought in by Mr. McLoon,-for a less sum however than the amount of his claim. Whereupon, not content with the lots, he turned about and sued Mr. Howard upon the bond and entered up a judgment. Of course defensive measures were undertaken on our part, and the judgment now sat almost as light upon my father's mind, as the unrighteous claim upon his conscience,-so far as we could see, it gave him no particular uneasiness. Still the mere raising of such questions gave us a feeling of uncertainty, of unsettledness; and there was nothing to wear it off. When our two boys had gone home for the holidays, we were left in unbroken quiet.

"Sometimes one enjoys everything less on such a day."
—My father had said true; and we had proved it. In all that bright Christmas there was nothing but contrast—never did sun throw such shadows,—it was hard to look at anything else. And the still Newyear's day, without a visiter now—for the world stands off from poverty as if it had, like truth, "the plague in its house"—gave us time and occasion to think of the three friends who would have drawn the closer to us for all our troubles,—Mr. Ned Howard,

Miss Easy, and Mr. Collingwood.

My first thought that morning was of them; and then I remembered that Time was playing a tune for all men to dance to—and lay in bed pertinaciously. And when I

came down to breakfast and answered my father's greeting, it was with eyes that dared not look up, lest he should see the tears in them.

Not such was the mood of the outer world. Bright icicles, and long blue shadows across the snow-covered lawn; and the more prussian blue sky, with a few white clouds; and little whirling simooms of snow, raised by a

most freaky wind.

Kate and I stood looking out when the sun had hid his face behind the woods, and a little train of gold-coloured clouds were reversing the custom of French courtiers, and quitting their master without the "grand coucher." The gleam on the distant hill-tops shone brightly, but the lake was in shade; and the tired skaters had most of them dismounted and were returning slowly to the shore. The ice, cold and unmelting, stretched away in the distance, but immediately in front of us there was a fine air-hole—the water as motionless as the ice itself. Between the trees, as we caught here and there a glimpse, it was of a goldribbed blackness; but a fine reddish-purple ran in among the ice-promontories, which stood out, sharp, and cleancut, into the bright water. On the lawn the snow was of a dead white; neither shadow nor gleam lay there, -no wish, no discontent!

"Dear Kate!" I said when we had stood for some time in silence, "I am so sorry I had nothing to give you to-day! I meant to have made something, and after all I could not

seem to find time."

"And dear Gracie! I am very glad that you did not try—you have been too busy indeed! We do not need to make presents to each other to show our love."

"No, but still it is pleasant, if one could, O I have a

great mind !-no you would not care for it, either."

"For what?" said Kate smiling. "I shall care for anything you choose to give me."

"No, for it's not worth having-it's only my dream."

"Let me hear it by all means."

"O, you've heard it,—don't you remember what I dreamed that night when Mr. Rodney came home, and I lay on the sofa? do you recollect?"

"Yes,"—she said with a quick change of colour.

"Well I took it into my head to tack rhymes to it, and see what it would look like then."

"And where is it?" said Kate leaning her head upon

mine."

"O in my strong box. But it only came into my head because I wanted to give you something."

"I must have it Gracie-I want to see it very much.

Run and get it for me."

"No need to run," I said laughing, "for the box is here, luckily. Now you shall not go away—you shall sit just where you were when I was dreaming. Ah if you had seen yourself then you wouldn't wonder."

And seating her before the fire, I stood behind her play-

ing with her hair while she read.

Katie, I dreamed again
We were forsaken;—
Friends, fortune, company—
Nothing was left but thee.—
Yet was I happy then—
Thou wert not taken!

Still in the wreck of all Shone thy smile clearer,— Still thou wert all my own; Still did thy gentle tone Make other losses small— Thou so much dearer!

Nor do I cling to thee
Only in seeming.
Sister, thy presence fills
Some of the sweetest rills
Flowing through life to me.—
Kate—was I dreaming?

She had not finished when Mr. Howard called me to look for something he wanted, and it was some time before I could return to the sitting-room. Kate was alone there still, in the easy-chair with her back to the window. She was leaning her head upon her hand; but as I came up she put one arm round me, and drawing me down to her lap made my head the resting-place for hers.

"Well," I said, putting my arms about her in turn, "don't you think I am a fine dreamer?—did you ever have

such a valuable Newyear's present before?"

She made me no answer, except by laying her lips instead of her cheek upon my forehead.

"Ah Katie!" I said laughing, "you shall not get off so! -you must give me most particular and explicit thanks. now, while I sit here."

"I fear I shall never be able to give them. Gracie."

"Why what is the matter?" I exclaimed trying to raise my head. "Has that poor dream troubled you again?"

"Troubled me ?-it gave me a great deal of pleasure

dear."

"But you don't answer me—has it troubled you? Katie, how could it!" I said sorrowfully, for I felt that my forehead was wet with her tears.

"How could it trouble me?" she said after a while,-"it made me think that you love me a little too much Gracie

-that was all."

"I can't love you too much-possibly!-what makes you say that? Aren't you well?" I exclaimed, raising myself up with a sudden feeling of paleness and sickness.

"Yes—my dear child! yes!—perfectly well. Why Gracie how you look at me! Lay your head down again—what has troubled you so, love? I assure you that your dream gave me a great deal of pleasure."

"You have just been making yourself sad with thinking of old times," I said sighing, "and no wonder."

"Don't you make yourself sad with thinking of anything," said Kate kissing me.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Then top and maintop crowd the sail,

Heave care o'er side!

And large, before enjoyment's gale,

Let's tak' the tide.

BURNS.

WE were in some danger of growing sad, all round, in this deep, reminding quiet of winter; and were really glad when the holidays were over,—glad to have ourselves

roused up, even by noise and confusion.

Archie and Candlish came back repotentized with both. It had always been a hard matter to make them let the cat alone, but now it seemed impossible. No sooner did an inch of fur make its appearance, than Candlish's left hand shot out beyond his right with great velocity, accompanied with a loud

"Me-ow! S-fitz!"-

At which unearthly sound Purrer-purrer would give her tail to the winds, and scamper off as if she had been a kitten. It was of little use to remonstrate,—promises were made in abundance, but if one boy remembered the other was sure to forget.

"Now what harm does it do, Miss Kate?" Archie would say,-"and it's such fun to see her put round the

house."

"Put what?" said Mr. Howard.

"The cat, sir—I say it's such fun to see her put round the house."

"And I say, put what?"

"I didn't say put anything, sir."

"That's the very thing I complain of."

"O—" said Archie, "you mean—yes, I remember.—But now Mr. Howard why isn't that good English?"

"Why aren't you a Dutchman?" said my father.

"Mamma," said Kate one morning as we sat at work, "are we making any headway by means of this teaching business?"

"Hardly—there are so many ends to be brought up. It is an important help certainly, but we cannot live on it long, if other means fail as fast as they have done for the last year."

"I shall have to go back to my old plans," said Kate,—
we must get some maps to colour. Why Wolf! what is

the matter?"

Wolfgang had suddenly roused himself out of sleep, and was expressing some unknown sentiments by a very gruff kind of breathing.

"Poor dog!" said Kate patting him, "why don't you lie

still?"

He gave her such a smile as a dog could, and lowered his ears in acknowledgement of her hand; but in a moment they were raised again, and with one bound he was at the door. It needed not his eager whine to bring us there too, nor to explain the light, quick footstep which reached it at the same moment on the outside,—it was Mr. Collingwood himself!

O how glad we were to see him !--too glad, for we were

nearer crying than laughing.

He had but a few hours to spend with us he said; but some business matters had brought him so near that he could not resist the temptation of coming for those few. And we talked through the rest of that short day with a degree of happiness and sadness that seemed a summary of the past year; and poor Wolfgang said what he could, nor was the least eloquent of the party, as he sat with one paw on his master's knee or sometimes as a great favour in his hand.

Mr. Rodney's words were like the fresh evening air to one who has borne "the burden and heat of the day." He told us of his occupations, his plans, his prospects; and gave us full sympathy for all our difficulties without once alluding to them; but his look and tone would often bear no other interpretation. With full eyes we sometimes acknowledged their gentle, beguiling power—I wondered too

how he could know so well all we had felt,—had he heard, or did he see?

It was with a changing expression of face that he looked on as Candlish came bounding into the room, and then subsiding a little at sight of the stranger knelt down by Kate, with a whispered entreaty that she would explain something. The seat next her was taken in a moment, and gently withdrawing the book from her lap, Mr. Rodney said.

"Suppose you let me play the part of assistant for to-

day. What is this knotty question?"

Candlish looked up in some surprise. "Miss Kate can explain it, indeed sir."

"I have not the slightest doubt of that," said Mr. Rodney. "But isn't it a possible thing for Miss Kate to get tired?"

"I don't believe she ever got tired helping me," said

Candlish affectionately.

"She hasn't had a chance to-day," said Kate as she held

out her hand for the book.

But Mr. Rodney gave her no answer except a smile; and with one arm drawing the boy a little nearer to his side, he again inquired what he wanted to know?

And Candlish, reassuring himself with another look,

dashed off into the midst of his difficulties.

Neither Kate nor I was suffered to look at a study-book that day; but I really thought the little learners found hard passages for the mere pleasure of having them explained.

"Isn't it a possible thing for Mr. Rodney to get tired?" said Kate when one of the many intrusions had come to an

end.

"Not when you are his alternative."

"But we are so used to it," I said,—"there is no need of your troubling yourself Mr. Rodney."

"Used to it!—I am only choosing the least of two kinds

of trouble, Gracie."

Nobody would have imagined that it was any trouble at all.

Even that day could not linger beyond its appointed time. But how sorry we were to see the sun set! and we enjoyed the twilight with a kind of accelerated pleasure. The boys were at their lessons, my father writing business letters, and Mrs. Howard had gone to order tea.

"And you are not weary of your charge?" said Mr. Rodney, looking from Wolfgang's upturned eye to us.

"O no," said Kate,—"you cannot think what a comfort he has been to us. He has seemed almost the only friend we had, sometimes."

"My dear Miss Kate!—I am glad you say 'almost'."

"But he has missed you," I said—"he never looks so at

"He has his own chain of remembrance and association, I suppose," said Mr. Collingwood sadly,—"I am perhaps such a link to him as he is to me. It is a great comfort to know that Wolfgang is so tenderly cared for-if it were only for the sake of the friends he used to have."

"You have not been to the Bird's Nest, Mr. Rodney,"

said Kate presently.

"Yes, I came that way this morning."-

And silently our thoughts had gone there, and were viewing it as it appeared when we stood on some of the stepping-stone years that we had passed over; when Andy put his head in at the door and said,

"If ye plase Miss Kate-thin it was Caddie should ha'

tolt ve and wouldn't!"

"Told us what?"

"Misther Carvill Miss,-he says would ye be afther lettin him have the dog now or will he take him, he says, Miss."

"Ask Mr. Carvill to walk in," said Kate.

"Carvill!" repeated Mr. Collingwood in a tone of utter amazement.

I threw some light wood on the fire but at first it only smoked, and the room was not fairly lit up till Mr. Carvill had been in it some moments,—his salutation was scarce visible.

"You see young ladies," he said as he advanced, his words gathering emphasis from Wolfgang's growl; -"I must have the dog this time, I really can't do without him-so it's no use to debate the point. Just let him go quietly without any fuss, and I'll answer all-Hey !- what theRodney! you here! where in the name of all the constel-

lations did you come from?"

"From under some more benign star than Sirius, I hope," said Mr. Rodney as he came forward and extended his hand.

"Deuce take your ears and my tongue!" muttered Mr. Carvill with a very dubious return of the proffered greeting.

"But where did you come from?" asked Mr. Rodney in his usual pleasant tone. "What do you expect to find in the snow at this time of year?"

"Deer."—

"Deer? you're too late for that, unless I have forgotten

the state game-laws."

"I haven't forgotten them," said Mr. Carvill, "for I never knew them and don't want to now. I came on business, and since you are here I suppose there'll be no more trouble about it."

"No more trouble?" said Mr. Rodney with some em-

phasis.

"Well—call it what you will—I never wanted to have any words with them."

"Words with them!"

The manner was emphasis enough.

"Confound it!" said Mr. Carvill impatiently, "I sha'n't stand here to be catechised about all I ever said or did!—you may ask anybody else you've a mind to. So I shall just take the dog with me and bid you good evening."

"By your leave, no," said his brother.

"No!—what do you mean by that? you're not going to stay here yourself?" said Mr. Carvill with a look of rather keen inquiry.

"I am not indeed."

"Then what do you mean by saying no?"

"Not a very hard word to understand, is it?" said Mr. Rodney smiling. "I mean that I cannot think of taking Wolfgang from such good quarters as he is in at present."

And Wolfgang's tail gave two or three little taps on the

floor by way of approval.

"But I tell you I want him man!—One of my dogs is lame, and I can't hunt without four."

"You must make three answer, for once."

"Why, what the devil!" said Mr. Carvill, too angry to conventionalize his words,—"you don't mean that you are going to refuse me just to please one of those girls?"

I had never seen Mr. Collingwood look so displeased; and he stood for a moment with compressed lips as if afraid to trust himself to speak. But then he said very gravely

and calmly,

"I am quite determined on this point, Carvill—my reasons I will give you at another time,—immediately, if you

wish, but not here."

"You are a confoundedly impracticable set, altogether!" said Mr. Carvill, colouring in spite of himself before that look of quiet dignity, and all the more angry because he felt ashamed—"I do believe you are bewitched as well as"—

· He checked himself—Mr. Rodney's quick glance might well have cut short any insinuations—and with a very cavalier bow Mr. Carvill left the room. Mr. Rodney followed, after one moment's grave thought.

Kate and I sat looking at each other with some surprise ·

and concern.

"I am so sorry I said what I did about Wolfgang! I am afraid it has caused all this mischief."

"Why don't you speak to Mr. Rodney and tell him?"

said I.

"If I can get a chance—but I don't want to speak of it

before papa, he likes Mr. Carvill little enough now."

Mr. Howard presently came into the room, but when we told him that Mr. Rodney had gone to spend a little time with his brother, he walked back to the study, merely requesting to be called when tea was ready.

Tea waited awhile; and then thinking that perhaps our visiter would take that meal at the Lea, we had just seated

ourselves at the table when he came.

"I insisted that Mr. Carvill had kept you prisoner," said my father, "and so would not let them wait any longer."

"I am very sorry you waited at all, sir."

There was a little of the weariness of sad feeling in the voice, that made me sincerely hope Mr. Carvill might not enjoy his tea.

My father busied himself about the duties of the table.

"You see," he continued, "a man is never too old to learn; and I have got some entirely new ideas upon the subject of self-denial."

"How ?-for pity's sake-" said my stepmother.

"In a long talk with Kate after you had gone to bed one night."

"I hope you do not mean to monopolize them sir," said

Mr. Rodney.

"Papa," said Kate looking up somewhat anxiously, "you are not at liberty to break confidence—I never gave you

leave to repeat what I said,"

"My dear you are breaking your own confidence. Nobody knew that it was anything of importance till you told them. If you will keep quiet I shall not say what you said and what I said—I am only going to give Mr. Rodney one or two abstract propositions."

"But papa—you do not mean—"

"I will tell what I mean Kate, if you will allow me. We were debating the question of self-denial Mr. Rodney—how far it ought to be carried, and so on. Whether one person is bound to sacrifice himself for another. What is your opinion?"

"It would be hard to give one upon such a question in

the abstract Mr. Howard."

"Well, for instance," said my father—"if by making myself happy I make you miserable, ought I not to make myself miserable and you happy?"

"Was that one of Miss Kate's propositions?" said Mr.

Rodney smiling.

"Never mind whose it was,—only give me an answer."

"Nay sir—one wants the application of such a question. I could not answer it without knowing who 'you' and 'I' stand for."

"I stand for the Dutchman's maxim," said my father—

"'every man for mineself,"

"Why papa," I said, "I don't see how anybody should even raise such a question, for it could not come up except

among people who truly loved each other."

"How will you get round the facts my dear? Kate and I did raise the question, and we do truly love several people."

"But it seems almost a contradiction papa."

"Well, contradict it in turn then-come, where lies the fallacy ?"

"The thing couldn't be, you know papa."

"What thing couldn't be? If you know where you are,

Gracie, I don't.

"Why papa—take Kate for instance—ought she to do anything to make herself happy if it made me miserable? is that what you mean?"

"That's a sufficiently clear statement of the case," said

my father. "Well Gracie?"

"But then if she were happy I couldn't be miserable."

How they all laughed! till I felt half abashed.

"That is decidedly the best solution of a difficulty I have heard this winter!" said my father. "Gracie my dear, you would have been invaluable at our conference. I hope you are satisfied with the conclusion Mr. Rodney?"

"I should be sorry indeed to come to any other, sir."

And the conversation took another turn.

"My dear Kate," said my father laughing and going round to her when we left the table, "what are you so grave about? I am sure none of the present company can suspect that any of their requests will ever make you miserable."

"Ah papa! how you do talk!"

"How I do talk!" Well go you off and talk too, while I see what those boys are about."

"An acquaintance of mine Miss Kate," said Mr. Rodney with a smile, as he followed us into the drawing-room, "says that there is this great comfort in writing to a friend who knows her thoroughly,—if perchance there is a word left out or put in, or another illegible, or her meaning be but half expressed, that friend has a clue to set it right. What has become of my little questioners? I haven't seen them this evening."

"O their appetites wouldn't abide postponement," said I laughing-" they had tea long ago, and have been at their

lessons. You will see enough of them by and by."

"Mr. Rodney," said Kate, "I wanted to tell you"-"You did or did not want to tell me?" said he smiling, for Kate hesitated.

"You must not think anything of what I said about Wolfgang,—we like very much to have him, but not unless you like it too."

"I do like it. I should not send him to the Lea in any event—he is just where I could wish him to be. There—

you have my hand upon it."

"O Miss Kate!" exclaimed both the boys as they came in, "Mr. Howard never gave us such long lessons before! O me!"

" Hi!"-

"I'm just about tired to death!"

"You'll recover by to-morrow morning," said Kate laugh-

ing.

"No I sha'n't! Much you know about it, Miss Kate! I don't believe you've done a thing to-day to tire you. You're looking just as well!—and not a bit pale to-night."

"You are ever so little of a fast talker Master Candlish," said Kate, laying her hands upon the little face that was

raised very benignly towards her.

"But you understood me."-

"How much you look like your sister," said Kate.

"Where did you ever see her? you told me but I disremember."

"And you have a little of that sort of forgetfulness for my instructions, I think," said my father who had joined us.

"Because I've been so long speaking straight to-day sir, I suppose I got tired," said the boy laughing, and then colouring a little as if half afraid he had gone too far.

"You haven't told me anything about this same sister of yours since you came back," said Kate.

He looked up again as bright as ever.

"Where did you see her? and didn't you like her very much?"

"I saw her at Mrs. Egerton's-for about five minutes."

"O then you couldn't tell. But we didn't see her either, this time—she isn't at home now."

"Not at home! is she married?"

"O no!" Archie said: while Candlish opening his eyes in grave astonishment, exclaimed,

"Why Miss Kate! I didn't know you ever thought of

such things!"

This tribute to Kate's simplicity was honoured with a very frank burst of merriment. Candlish looked somewhat confounded, but stood his ground.

"Well, you may laugh!" he said, the hue of his cheeks nearly rivalling Kate's, "but I didn't! She never talks about such things as other girls do, nor Miss Grace neither."

"Did it ever occur to you," said Mr. Rodney, with whom the boy had rather taken refuge, "did you ever hear what 'girls' are usually called after they have grown up?"

Candlish looked up at the eyes that were bent so kindly upon him, and then laughed and shook his head as if his

memory were a very treacherous thing indeed!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Whence are you sir? Has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such companions? Pray, get you out.—Shakspeare.

THE pleasure of that visit left a long after-glow; for if I we felt more than ever the loneliness of being alone, it was something to look forward to such days as possible—it was something even to have had pleasure. For a while we were very quiet and happy, and were fast relapsing into somewhat of the old peaceful feeling. Not with the old bright visions and enjoyments—that could not be; we had been too closely trimmed to venture forth many buds or flowers,-but with a degree of negative happiness that the trials and excitements of late years made very pleasant. We began to think that apprehension might be laid aside—that the world had done what it wished and would now leave us a corner of the wide earth uncontested; and when Archie and Candlish were again summoned home by some great family occasion, we could have echoed their parting words, that "we had had such a nice time since the holidays!" We could live after any fashion if only let alone; and the winter had gone off on its smooth runners, without sleigh bells certainly, but yet with few jars. We were just at the end of February.

"The pilgrims came to a delicate plain called Ease, but that," says Bunyan, "was but narrow, so they were soon

got over it."

I was awaked one morning just as the day began to dawn, by a knocking at the front door. There was no one stirring in the house, and I lay still for a minute to listen. Again the knock, not very loud but very distinct—what could it be? I raised myself on my elbow and tried to consider, with a curious feeling as if the knock needed no particular

attention and might die away of itself—as if it were but a visionary part of the twilight. There it was again, softly as before, but this time at the back of the house. Most unpleasantly startled I crept out of bed and going to my father's door tapped gently—he was already aroused; and I went back with all quietness that I might not wake Kate. Was it the cold air that sent such a chill over me?

I heard my father open his window, and call.

"Who is there?"

No answer, and none came to the second demand. I well remembered that when I was a child a messenger had brought us tidings of sickness and death, in the very middle of the night; and now, few as our friends were, my mind could fix upon nothing else. But what—or who—or where? I knew whence came the chill now.

By this time Caddie was up, and had gone down stairs. I heard her returning, and throwing on my wrapper I ran out, and looked over the balusters to ask what was the matter.

"O Miss Grace," said Caddie, speaking low and with much sorrow and interest, "wait till I tell ye! it's some-

body from Mr. McLoon."

For a moment I felt relieved—then came the strong instinct of self-preservation. Nobody could come for good at that time in the morning.

"Is he in the house, Caddie?"
"No Miss, it's in the piasy he is."

back, and the sorrow thrown forward.

"Then fasten the door-Mr. Howard will be there directly."

And even as I went to call him he passed me, and went

swiftly down stairs.

I had no mind that any encounter should come off without my powerful presence; so dressing myself with all ste and stealthiness, I gave one glad look at Kate's closed yes, listened a moment to make sure that Mrs. Howard was not up—a fair proof she was not awake—and then tipped my way down,—the gladness of my heart thrown

My father was in the kitchen, exchanging most energetic remarks through the window with the man in the "piasy"; who sat doggedly up against the house, as if he had been

part of the clapboarding.

Wolfgang's attention was divided as impartially as could be expected; for while keeping Mr. Howard close company within, his keen looks and deep growls towards the piazza seemed to say that his heart lay there; and the said heart now and then relieved itself by a bark that made the walls ring. At any other time I should have laughed at him, and I came near it as it was.

Caddie had been shut out with the intruder, and was flitting about the piazza, and sending encouraging looks into the dark kitchen where the morning light was trying

to make its way.

"I order you to leave the house," were the first words I heard.

"And I sha'n't go till I've done my job," came sourly

from the clapboards.

"What is it papa?" I said softly, "what is the matter?"

"That fellow McLoon has sent a sheriff here with an execution. If he comes to the house I'll put him in the lake!" said Mr. Howard with a fierce reference to the absent Mr. McLoon, his voice trembling with agitation as he paced up and down the kitchen.

I laid my hand on his arm.

"Dear papa! please do not speak so—he is not worth your notice. And do not be so troubled-we shall not mind anything if you do not. Pray keep yourself quiet."

"What?" he said, stopping and looking at me.
"Pray do not be troubled," I repeated,—"can't we keep

this man out?"

"Keep him out! yes!" he said vehemently, "if I had any one to help me I'd put him out of the piazza! You will take cold my child," he added eyeing me, for I was trembling all over, "there's no fire yet—go upstairs Gracie, and keep yourself warm."

"I am not at all cold papa—it's not that; I would much

rather be here."

"The scoundrel!" he muttered, taking another turn through the kitchen-"when he has no more right to the money than he has to me!" And pausing before the window Mr. Howard repeated,

"I order you to leave the house." "Yes-I hear-" said the man.

"Papa I wouldn't talk to him," I said. "We've got the doors locked—he can't force them open. Come in the other room papa, and I'll make the fire—you will take cold yourself."

"No my dear child, no—I am perfectly warm. You had better go in there,—or get my cloak and wrap round

you."

"I don't need it papa."

The sheriff got up from his seat, and taking out pencil and paper he began to note down all that he could see through the window.

"Can he do that?" I asked.

"No, of course not!" said my father,—"that is not a proper levy. I shall go out and tell him as much, and send him about his business."

"O I wouldn't go out there."-

"Why not?" he said kindly. "Don't you trouble yourself Gracie—I'll manage everything, never fear—and keep as cool as a cucumber. Just fasten the door behind me—

no, no, old boy-you stay here."

I kept back Wolfgang and shut the door; and then stood anxiously awaiting in that fireless room the result of the conference. Mr. Howard was very clear and decided, the sheriff cool and impertinent,—the point in dispute being whether the piazza was or was not the house. The sheriff maintained that he had got in, my father that he neither had nor should. On this last point I was equally resolved, and took another look at the bolt:

This was neither Mr. Cross nor his successor, but whether head sheriff or deputy I did not know. He had a surly, sneaking look, that promised no fair treatment nor

civility.

"Well," said Mr. Howard in conclusion, "I tell you to go, and if you don't go I shall find some means of compelling you."

And with that he re-entered the kitchen, while the sheriff

noted down,

6 kitchen chairs.

"Is Mr. McLoon here himself?" said my father, opening the door far enough for his voice to go out, and holding it fast. "I guess he is-he come down 'long with me this morn-

ing."

And apparently relieved by this reference to his principal, the man opened the piazza door and shouted,

"Mr. McLoon!"

A merry "chick-a-dee-dee-dee!" came back to us from an early riser of a black-cap. It was clear he didn't understand English!

"Mr. McLoon!"-

"I reckon he's somewheres round amongst the trees," said the sheriff-"he can't ha' went off;" and stepping out on the door-stone he again lent both eye and voice to the search.

With a quick foot I passed my father, but fearing to lose that one instant I signed to Caddie who was before me; and when the sheriff turned round it was to see a closed and bolted door. He was outside now, "and no mistake!"

For a minute he looked very silly,—then without a word he marched off to institute a personal search for the invisible Mr. McLoon. Was ever sound so pleasant as the crunching of the frosty ground by his boots! I could hardly believe my senses. Caddie put her hands on her sides and laughed as if she had found a gold mine. And retreating into the citadel we fastened everything that could be fastened.

"Now let's have breakfast as soon as we can, Caddie,"

said I.

"Breakfast! is it at this time in the morning?"

"Yes, as soon as you can," I repeated.
"Ha, ha?"—said Caddie—"breakfast, hey? And what time 'll ye be after wanting dinner?"

"I don't know about that. But we have a fine quiet

time now for breakfast, and it's not best to wait."

"It's a fine breakfast they meant yees should have," said Caddie.—"There's himself agin! Och! 'ye ain't good lookin and ye can't come in!"

The sheriff peered through the window of the piazza, and

then with a loud voice he called out,

"I come to tell you that I've levied upon the cow, and you ain't to do nothing with her-and upon the woodpile too," he said, turning back to give this second piece of information.

"Very well!" said my father with a nod of his head

that promised small compliance.

We went into the breakfast-room, and soon had a bright fire blazing; but my father was too much excited to sit down or even to warm himself. He walked the floor, nervously biting his under lip and seeing X Y and Z in the carpet: sometimes looking out of the window, or going into the kitchen, with now and then an interjection, or an absent "what?" addressed to me. And I sat and stood by turns, talking or entreating, but trembling still,—for a rough hand had struck the keys, and the wires could not cease their noiseless thrilling.

By this time mamma and Kate came down; and we asked and told and consulted, till Caddie brought in breakfast and we had taken the brace of a cup of hot coffee.

My father was not long in determining that he must go

that very day to consult Mr. Phibbs.

"But I cannot leave you here alone, either," he said: "those men might come back again."

"Very well," said Kate, "let them come—they won't

get in."

"Yes but I can't bear to have you subjected to all this annoyance—you've had too much as it is. Perhaps writing would answer every purpose, and then I could be here to deal with them."

"O no," said Mrs. Howard, "I wouldn't trust to it; the post-office is not always regular. And if they should chance to come again I would much rather you were away than here."

"But you must have some one in the house, and Andy has a week's leave of absence."

"Get John Finigan."

"He is worth little enough—however I don't suppose McLoon will attempt violent measures. But keep the doors shut."

The idea of telling us that!

Mr. Howard went off to take the first stage; and we went the rounds of the front windows and doors, and then proceeded to the kitchen to give Caddie her instructions.

Miss McInn's "tight" little figure, habited in very short petticoats and very high boots, was in full tide of business among the breakfast dishes: the table before which she stood being well piled with them; and bearing besides a tub of water of which the temperature might be guessed from the decided pink of her hands, and the cloud of steam which enveloped her head. It proved itself too by the clear brightness of the already washed and dried cups, and by the very small portion of moisture they had transferred to the towels which hung on the maiden at her side. From the very midst of the cloud of steam came forth in a strange buzzing tone,

"There lived a tailor beyont Athlone,
And he had nine daughters down by his knee."

"Caddie," said my stepmother, "I hope we shall have this matter arranged in a few days, but until it is we must keep shut doors. Don't open them to anybody; and if you have to go out yourself call one of us to stand by the door till you come back."

"Then it's never a fut one of 'em 'll set in here Mrs. Howard!" said Caddie turning about, and stripping the water off her hands. "I've seen enough of 'em, the villains! It's me ought to know them, for the times I've seen

'em at home-in the ould country."

"Seen sheriffs do you mean?" said Kate.

"Indeed an' I do Miss Kate! I've seen 'em! I wouldn't doubt but they're hiding some place round the house now, just; and if we'd open the door ever so little it's in they'd be, and sorrow a bit could we get 'em out!"

Involuntarily I looked to the door, while a most uncomfortable shiver ran over me from head to foot. I thought of Lady Clonbrony's

"Slide in? O horrid!"—

"It's many a time I've seen 'em!" said Caddie, going on with her enlivening stories and the dishes at once,—"long ago, at home—in swate county Kerry! It'll be goin' on twelve year agin December next, sin they come to my father's house one morning afore the day. And my father was laying the fire, and wasn't dressed itself. And it's bitter could it was, and snow that thick—and we childer

in bed; for my father says 'Lie still,' he says, 'till the fire'll burn,' he says. And then them niggers giv a little knock at the door—just so as ye wouldn't hardly hear it—and they'd come up unbeknownst on account of the snow being on the ground, ye see. Well Miss Kate sure enough they giv this knock, and little Pat (that's sister's son to my brother-in-law Miss Kate) he just undid it; and my father never knew a hate about it ill they was all in, and he lighting the fire; and the turf wouldn't burn; and my father says 'Weary on it!' he says; and then he just looks about and there they was all!"

She had stopped her work, and with excited eye and voice had gone over this bit of her experience as if the whole scene were present before her; giving the last few

words with the very feeling of the time.

"And did they take anything, Caddie?" I asked.

"Troth an' they did Miss!—just took all they could find but a bag of pertaters that was hid in the roof out of sight! 'And isn't it some of the childer ye'd be afther takin?' says my father says he, 'for there's nothing in life for 'em to do here,' says he. Sheat!" exclaimed Caddie cutting short her account with a sudden spring towards the dutch-oven.

"Then Miss Grace that cat's intill everything!"

From that time our house might have been the abode of the Koh-i-noor, for the way it was guarded. A casual observer on the outside would have thought the family not at home,—and truly I thought so myself. It was a strange kind of a home! Closed doors, and quiet movements, and anxious hearts; and though the sun got leave to look in at the windows, it was across a visionary shadow of Mr. McLoon or the sour sheriff. Not a pail of water could be wanted that Caddie did not come and say,

"Now I'm going to the pump-if one of yees would be

plased to mind the door.

And then generally two of us went. For ourselves we were afraid to venture out except all together, lest as Kate said, they should take advantage of our being out and beset the door.

A blockade is a much more serious affair than any one would suppose.

No doubt we concerned ourselves more than need be,-

perhaps the blockade was only imaginary; but an unseen danger is always magnified, and who would venture upon a "perhaps"? We knew though they could make no levy in the night-time, they might try to get a man into the house who would open to them next day—such things had been done. And so we considered ourselves in a state of siege, and saw the sun set and the darkness come that first night with no relief, except that the door need not be opened quite so often as in the day; and then sat down to our work with that old feeling of limited strength and unlimited resolution!

It was a perfectly still evening. The winds seemed asleep, and gave only now and then the faintest of murmurs,—the field was clear for any sound that chose to take it. Our little fire modestly asserted its existence, and Caddie and John Finigan asserted theirs—by a dead level of talk. But their tongues grew tired, and their boots creaked upstairs to bed, and the field was clearer than ever.

"I think we had better go to bed too," said my step-

mother.

But as we looked up to give our assent, there came a knock at the front door.

How our eyes met and our hearts trembled!

It came again. Not a cheerful, busy rat! tat!, but one solitary rap, beginning and ending in itself,—not very loud, not energetic—it just announced—somebody.

Kate spoke first, and softly.

"We mustn't open the door mamma—it may be a trick

of those people to get in."

Mrs. Howard took the light and proceeded upstairs, we following. Invest anything with a hidden, undefined, stealthy character, and you make it terrible;—therefore as we went we trembled—at that simple knock.

Leaving our candle in the hall we entered one of the dark bedrooms, and opening a window Mrs. Howard inquired

who was there?

"Is Mr. Howard at home?" said a voice, while a man stepped off from the house and apparently tried to see us.

"No," said my stepmother.

"Where is he?"

"He went away this morning."

"Do you know when he'll be back?"

"No," she replied again. "Who wants him?"

"I have a letter from Mr. McLoon."

My stepmother paused a moment, and then simply repeated,

"Mr. Howard is not at home."

The man waited a little, shifting his weight from one foot to the other and grinding the gravel under them—perhaps expecting that we would make some proposition,—then he walked off.

"It's nothing in the world but a trick!" said Kate—
"What should Mr. McLoon have to write to papa at this
time of night?—they thought we would open the door and
then they could just walk in."

"Well, we are safe for this time," said my stepmother.
"But mamma," said Kate, "what if they should come again? and if Finigan heard them he'd maybe go and open

the door before we knew anything about it."

Mrs. Howard called Caddie, and desired her to tell our guard that there had been people at the house already, and that if he should hear any more raps he must take no notice of them.

We had gone to bed, and sailing off on the sea of oblivion had just "sunk" Mr. McLoon, when we were again roused, —Caddie and Finigan were earnestly consulting or disputing across the passage which divided their rooms. Mrs. Howard sprang up to see what was doing, just as Caddie presented herself at our door.

"What's the matter now?"

"Meself doesn't know ma'am—it's John Finigan says it's sick he is."

"Sick ?"

"Then he'll never be killed unknownst!" said Caddie in a parenthesis of contempt. "An' sure an' if ye are sick, says I, why can't ye lie still, says I, and not be wakin all the house, says I."

"And is he going to lie still?" said Mrs. Howard.

"What does he want? what's the matter with him?"

"The dear knows! But he says it's home he'd like to be. An' how are ye to get home, says I, and we to be opening the doors for ye, says I—and the master away too!"

And putting her arms in their favourite position, Caddie

laughed comically.

"For pity's sake let him go if he wants to!" said Mrs. Howard again getting up. "I presume he's afraid those people will come back; and if they do he is as well away as here. I'll go down with you to fasten the door after him—he wouldn't be of much use if we wanted anything."

"It's only a peelin' of a man he is, any way," said Caddie. "Och them greenhorns ain't got the sense of Chris-

tians!"

They fastened the door after the deserter, but Mrs. Howard and Caddie both affirmed that they had heard other steps on the walk; and between imagining our besiegers still about and Finigan's sickness another trick, we contrived to fever and excite ourselves sufficiently.

"Suppose we let Caddie come and sleep in our room,

mamma," said Kate.

"In our room?"

"Yes, she might lay her bed on the floor. Don't you

think we should feel more comfortable?"

So Caddie took up her mattress, and placing it in the middle of the room where we were all together that night, she presently went to sleep thereon. Not much protection certainly,—but those sturdy, round arms were company at least, and when the numbers in a garrison are reduced to feminine units, they tell best together. And the rest of the

night passed without disturbance.

We had provisions enough to enable us to hold out for some time—neither did the enemy attempt to invest the pump: so far we were as usual. Finigan was not again admitted into the house, but Mr. Howard's return saved us from being quite alone. Still no measures of Mr. Phibbs could as yet have taken effect, and our door-openings continued to be of the most cautious—especially when my father's place was supplied by Andy. Every window that was not a daily ventilator was nailed down; and never did we open a door at all without a most careful survey of its exterior from some neighbouring pane of glass. I presume we were much more ingenious than either Mr. McLoon or his agents,—I doubt whether they could have contrived half the surprises that we did. And to this day I know not but

the blockade was imaginary—nor that it was. It made no difference in our discomfort at the time,—it was very real for all practical purposes.

"I don't like to have you go into the garden alone," Kate would say. "They might just take advantage of your

being out, and station themselves at the door."

"They shouldn't get in-if I staid out all day!"

"But that would not be pleasant."

And Mrs. Howard thought "we had better stay in, or go together." We came to be in the condition of Florence Dombey's dog—with "a perpetual unseen enemy round the corner." Our own dog was certainly more restless than usual, but that might have been caught from us. And if ever we cooled down a little, Caddie would strike in with,

"Why Miss Kate, I've seen 'em keep watch day and night round a house, nor never lave it till they'd get in!"

Even my father when appealed to said he really couldn't tell. Mr. Phibbs had done this and that—he thought there could be no danger—but he had been so often deceived and disappointed by law and lawyers that he hadn't much confidence left in either. What gave emphasis to his words was that he always locked the door himself. And so bolts and bars were kept in full requisition.

But there never was anything so wearisome! the constant fear—the constant mounting guard—the constant vision of danger, hooded and cloaked,—we were half tempted to run away and leave Mr. McLoon to deal with an empty house. If his desire had been our discomfort, it was

fully accomplished,—he did not know how well.

Sunday was the only free day; and it was a perfect luxury to open the doors and air the house of its prison-like feeling. To stand in the doorways with careless impunity—to go in and out with no tremor. It was long, long before the experience of those weeks wore off. Even when the whole affair was finally disposed of, there lingered in our minds an association with open doors that made them disagreeable; and many a time, in summer weather, have I got up to turn a key or draw a bolt, and then breathed freer!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Now sit we close about this taper here, And call in question our necessities.

SHAKSPEARE.

A ND so we lived on; but whether or no Mr. McLoon still "ticed" round among the trees, he did not again present himself at the house, either in person or by the sour-looking sheriff. Meanwhile the little garrison held many a debate—What were they to do? how should they live?

Even before our late disturbance my father had determined not to have Archie and Candlish come back. "It cost more than it came to," he said; "and what we wanted was capital—not interest." Had that been otherwise, two such little door-openers were not to be thought of.

"But what will you do then?" said Mrs. Howard,—"we must get money in some way,—I want ten dollars for

Caddie at once."

My father expressed his sense of the difficulty by one or two of the wordless signs of emotion, but gave no further reply; and breakfast proceeded rather moodily. It was early spring-time,—the season had just arrived and was setting itself to work; and the sweetest of March winds they are sweet in the country—was blowing off what it could of the world's dust.

"What will you do papa?" said Kate.

"Read the letters I guess," said Mr. Howard as he took up those which Andy had just laid on the table, and moved his chair to the fire. He sat reading and musing for a long time; and then handing an open epistle to my stepmother he said, "There is what I can do, if I've a mind."

"What is this?"

"A letter from Mr. Pelion of the — Institute, containing a request that I will deliver a course of lectures on American history for the benefit of the young ideas under his charge; and, as a secondary inducement, for my own,"

"At this time of year? I thought winter was the lecture

season."

"But Mr. Pelion has discovered that 'young ladies' minds are relaxed by the enervating spring weather's they'll be the fitter to understand me I suppose."

"What a foolish man!" I said, "to write that,—he might

better have kept his opinions to himself."

"I don't care for his opinions nor for the facts," said Mr. Howard,—"the question is, is it worth my while to give in to his plan. It's an easy enough way of earning money and the money would not be thrown away, -unless the ears of the young ladies have shared the general relaxation."

"I advise you to do it by all means," said my stepmother. "If they pay you well you would not find it a disagreeable business."

"No, not at all—neither does it matter about that. But there is one great difficulty,-I should be almost constantly

away for two or three months."

"But then papa," said Kate gently, "we must do as we can you know; and consider what is best rather than what is pleasant. It is very bad to have you away, but neither you nor we could be comfortable to sit quietly here and earn nothing."

"I've a notion something would start us up pretty quick if we did," said my father. "I do not intend to stay here in idleness Kate,—the thing is how to leave you alone."

"Why we must make up our minds to stay with Andy,

as we have done before," said Mrs. Howard.

"I can't think of that. It has made me uncomfortable enough when I have been away for two weeks, and two months is another affair. And besides, now I think of it, Andy wants to go to Canada for the summer, to see his sister I believe. So you see I am in a puzzle. I can neither stay at home nor go away."

"Mamma," said Kate, after our minds had several times made the tour of circumstances; "wouldn't it be almost worth while for us to get board somewhere for the time papa wants to be gone?"

"Very well worth while indeed, Katie, if we could; but

I shouldn't know where to apply."

"There's Mrs. Shelton's, at the Moon," said my father.

"That would cost too much. And our wardrobe is not

quite in order for any such place."

"Mrs. Barrington!" cried I; "wouldn't she take us? and there we should be near enough to see our gardens once in a while."

"Why that is a brave thought, Gracie," said Kate,—"I daresay she would, for their house has much more room in

it than they can use."

I thought both Mr. and Mrs. Howard looked at us a little wistfully when this plan was proposed; but it seemed feasible: and as my stepmother's eye went back to him with a smile that said "we must not mind trifles,"—my father raised no objection, and promised to see Mrs. Barrington that very day.

"Here's another letter that deserves some attention," he said; "one too that I ought to have got long ago. Those books of brother Ned's have been boxed up and forwarded to me from Baltimore, with the trunk I left there and some other matters. I suppose they have been at Ethan for these two weeks. I must see after them first of all."

But Mr. McLoon had been beforehand with us. Having by some means found out that a little of our property was lodged in the stage-office at Ethan, his first thought was that he wanted it, his second to send the sheriff to make a levy; and when my father applied for his boxes the officeman was "very sorry, but he had been ordered not to let them be taken."

People do sometimes run so fast that they fall down; and Mr. McLoon, forgetting that the county-line went just this side and not beyond Ethan, had fairly given the sheriff a job out of his jurisdiction. The levy was easily set aside; but not without another journey to Mr. Phibbs, not without an unnecessary increase of our scrutinizing and watchful anxiety,—during those few days the blockade was redoubled.

We began to think with pleasure of being rid of it at least for the summer. Mr. Phibbs would fain have had us rid of it at once. Everything was arranged he said, and except the occasional service of a paper there was nothing more to do. But when Mr. McLoon's whole claim was such as no man of honour could have urged, who would trust him for the means he might use to further it?"

Mrs. Barrington was more than willing to take us into her house,—her only doubt being that it was "a poor sort of a place"; but we agreed to supply any deficiencies from our own establishment, and that set her mind at rest.

We had debated whether to take Caddie with us, but decided against it; partly on the score of expense, partly because it might give our hostess much extra trouble. But Caddie succeeded in finding a lady at the Moon who was glad to get so good a servant even for a short time; and

thus all obstacles were smoothed away.

All obstacles to Mr. Howard's going—not all to his going speedily. Arrears in the purse usually have ramifications in every other department; and when it is very hard to buy materials it is not easy to have always a well-ordered wardrobe. Take away the weekly mending, and Mr. Howard's was merely nominal. He wanted collars, and he wanted shirts, and he wanted pantaloons.

"If you would get some drilling and let the tailor cut you out a pair of pantaloons, I am sure I could make them," said Mrs. Howard. "How much do you pay as

it is?"

"About five dollars," said my father.

"And how much does the stuff cost?"

"From twelve to eighteen shillings."

"Then it is well worth my while to do it."

When Mr. Howard came back from Philadelphia with his various purchases, he produced a great bundle containing the cut-out pantaloons, but also stuff for five other pair! remarking that "he thought he might as well get enough while he was about it." He saw not Mrs. Howard's look of dismay, and she said not a word till he was out of the room.

"I have got my hands full now! when in the world shall I ever make six pair of pantaloons!—with all else that I've

got to do. If I were accustomed to the work—but I never made a pair in my life!"

"Why didn't you tell papa?"

"My dear Kate," said Mrs. Howard smiling, "when you are at the head of a house always remember, that words spoken when they can do no good are worse than wasted. I may talk to you about it for it's a sort of relief, but what would be the use of telling your father that he had misunderstood me and made a mistake?"

"Then he'd remember next time."

"No he wouldn't—he'd only be uncomfortable now. The time to speak is before, not after; and I did speak, but not it seems with sufficient clearness."

"You couldn't know that he would think one pair meant

half a dozen."

"It's very plain that he never tried tailoring!" said Mrs. Howard with a little shake of her head.

"But why not send some of them away to be made?"

"Because dear he did not calculate for that; and though there is not a pair more than he wants, there are several pair more than he can afford to have made—by any one but me."

Kate looked as if she thought it a doubtful saving of

expense.

"The time to speak," said Mrs. Howard with as bright a face as if the pantaloons had been patchwork, "is as I told you, before the thing is done. Never shew a gentleman a mistake unless it can be mended—that only gives pain: but upon the next occasion I might tell him 'do so,' and 'do not so,'—then he would never know that he had given me any trouble. I would rather do anything than that he should know it—or want the pantaloons, either. So would you in my place. But do you think you and Grace can go on with those shirts all alone? for I must touch nothing till this job is disposed of."

"O yes," said Kate, "we can manage the shirts well enough; but that is such hard work for you mamma—you

had better let us take it."

"No indeed! Don't look so disconsolate Gracie,—'it's a long lane that has no turning', so we may reasonably hope that this roll of drilling will in course of time pass

through my hands, and come out pantaloons. But I wish the tailor had sent a key to his cuttings! I suppose this is meant for a pocket—but how or where!—Well I must take an old pair for guide."

Quietly, steadily we worked; Kate and I sometimes bending over the shirts, sometimes sitting up to look out at the blowing trees for recreation. Then Mrs. Howard would

say,

"See—haven't I put in that pocket beautifully? now this pair is all done but the button-holes. I shall leave them for you Katie, for you will do them best, and I'll help you on the shirts."

"No need mamma, I can do them in short order. Gracie love, stop sewing—I know you are tired. Now just stop

and rest yourself!"

"I want to finish putting in these sleeves Katie."

"But you'll do yourself a mischief—you've been sewing so long and steadily. I'd rather work all night than have

you get so tired, child."

And her words send to my heart one of those two-edged feelings—those bright indemnifications that rich people never know. And with a smile I answer,

"I won't hurt myself Katie-never fear."

I know not if gold always acts as a wedge, but I have proved that in its absence the inner particles grow very near together by dint of a little outward-compression.

And then Mr. Howard comes in, and patting our shoul-

ders says rather sadly,

"Don't work too hard."

And we sew on, with a new infusion of the spirit not of

strength but of willingness.

Nevertheless Kate says I looked peaked, and I tell her that she looks pale; and Mrs. Howard is only too ready for bed.

Then we send for Mrs. Barrington to help Caddie clean house; for as Mrs. Howard remarks "we sha'n't want to have it done at midsummer." It is not a fair cleaning house, either,—we feel too unsettled to undertake that; but it's just enough to make every room chill and uncomfortable. And such a watching of keys and bolts! Sometimes our work-room is without a carpet, sometimes it has a

strong savour of soapsuds or whitewash. Sometimes we put up work altogether, and wash china. For the storeroom is clean and its contents must be clean also; and this china—one of our Philadelphia relics—may not be broken. Mrs. Barrington indeed might be trusted, but her hands are otherwise employed; and as for trusting Caddie—who thinks no pitcher has a right to a nose, and that cup handles are supernumerary! So the weariness of constant sitting is exchanged for that of standing; and the varieties of the day are carrying heavy piles of dishes to and from the closet, and the frequent exchange of wet towels for dry. Kate says she would about as lieve run the risk of breakage—for "when shall we ever give dinner-parties?" And Mrs. Howard tells her laughingly, that

"Did youth but know what age would crave, Many a penny would it save."

Whereupon we both express a desire to know where the pennies are? and also an opinion that youth's power of ex-

travagance is sometimes limited.

It is not uncomfortable out of doors-how lovely! how fair! And I think half sighingly of the wood beauties that I have no time to search out. The lilacs load the air with their fragrance, and their clusters lose somewhat of their first pink, and take more of the true lilac colour as the buds open: then they are all lilac-or white, -then touched with brown; and then among the things that were. And the laburnums are in full flower; but we have only time for now and then a glance at their yellow luxuriance, and Mrs. Howard declares that she never has a fair chance to see them, for they always bloom when she is most busy. Then the air is "faint with sweetness"—or would be if it were musk instead of locust-flowers-and we are almost as much attracted as the bees. Happy bees! whose work is among the flowers,—who thread the air while we thread needles!

And when I have been busy all day with fingers or feet, I sit quietly at the window after sundown feeling very, very tired, and look at the north-western sky with the dark outline of hill and trees against it. I remember one night in particular.

The blue of the zenith had disappeared far above the horizon, but not faded, it had only given place to a clear cool brilliancy—an indescribable colour, or want of colour, rather. And how much the sight rested and refreshed me!—the feeling was akin to that of "cold waters to a thirsty soul." Is it that the very idea of peace rests one? or that all the chords of man's being are within Nature's reach, and answer to the touch of her fingers? The mind in its weariness and fluctuation lays hold of what is as Carlyle says, "So still! eternal!" with immediate steadiness and relief.

The May roses had spent their beauty, the Harrisons were in full pursuit, and one bud on our favourite Rouge de Luxembourg was peeping from its calyx to look at the world, before Mr. Howard was ready for his departure. He had protested against going until he had seen us settled in our farm-house; but we had raised a counter protestation, and as he was short of time my father had to yield.

It was but little we had to move. Mrs. Barrington's fears had looked rather at our imaginary than our real wants, and the apartments she had got ready for us needed little done on our part. There was however much to be done at home,—things to put up and arrange, winter clothes to stow away and summer clothes to get out; and not a few of the latter to be mended or altered. Mr. Howard's claims had crowded our own out of sight. Some articles could be finished after our removal, but of others we were in immediate need; and we had a tiresome week before we were ready to leave the Glen;—too tiresome, too busy to let us feel its full sadness,—there was only the constant pressure of something.

It seemed strange too. We were going but for a while—my father had left us in excellent spirits, and his absence was not to be very long; but it was perhaps the trying of a cord that must soon break,—should we ever live there again? and even a temporary removal seemed to take us further from those happy years that we had outgrown. One pleasant thought stood alone in the midst of it all—Mrs. Barrington's house would be more of a castle than our own could be,—there, Mr. McLoon would not even try to enter: we could have open doors to our heart's content.

"Wolfgang's shanty 'll go I s'pose ma'am?" said Mr. Barrington, as he and his wife made their appearance on the morning of our breaking-up. "I guess likely as he come from England he mightn't care about sleeping with Coal."

"Yes, it may as well go," said my stepmother with a smile. "But how will Coal like such an intrusion upon

his premises?"

"He?" said Mrs. Barrington—"my! why Mrs. Howard he'll be tickled to death! He's a dreadful sociable little

dog, and not a bit crabbed."

"Ain't a thing in town that don't like him," said Ezra, "'cept Mr. Carvill's Mire-a-bow; and his likin would be a small notion of a compliment for he's as ugly as he can live."

And Coal wriggled himself almost into a circle to prove

his amiability.

"Have done! will ye?" said Ezra. "You ain't got so much to boast of in the way o' looks that ye need put yourself out to make folks stare at ye."

"The last dog we had was dreadful handsome," said Mrs. Barrington with a benign look at the little rough black

terrier; "but he got blowed up."

And Kate and I make a rush upstairs lest our sympathy should be testified in a very extraordinary manner. The laugh was soon checked in those deserted rooms—they looked so desolate,—the shadows of past years lay there, and not even the warm May sun could do more than set them off. I had seen that same house, at that same season, in all the complicated disorder of building, cleaning and moving, but it looked very different now; for, says Bacon, "Hope is a good breakfast, but it is a bad supper."

Kate seized a carpet-bag and ran down again, and I fol-

lowed her with a bandbox.

"I'd be caution!" said Mr. Barrington as in a somewhat summary manner he pounced upon bag and box at once, "I'd be caution I could ha' fetched them things a'most as quick as you have! I h'ain't quite forgot how to run up and down stairs yet. Ain't there no other way left o' takin exercise?"

And marching out with great dignity Ezra bestowed the bag under the seat of his ox-cart.

"'ll this pasteboard thing stand fire?" he said with an inquiring look towards Kate and me as we stood holding the door. "You needn't be so skeery about the door Miss Kate—if he gets in I'd just as soon pitch him out as not, and a notion rather. But I say has this here concern got to be made much of? had it ought to stand up or lie down?"

"My!" said Mrs. Barrington running out, "don't you know no better than to stick a ban'box eend-ways up? it's

got things into it!"

"It ain't got no hole for 'em to run out of,"—said Ezra,
—"leastways if that 'ere streaked bag don't kiver it up!—

and then one would think they couldn't run out."

"A person would think a great many things," said his wife as she clambered into the cart and settled and unsettled the baggage to her liking; "but wiser folks than you and me Ezra, has been mistook afore now."

"Well I'll never deny that!"—said Mr. Barrington who stood with his hands resting on the cart-rave. "Go ahead! the oxen won't run away—that's a blessing! And if they did you'd ride soft in there 'mongst all that nonsense."

"Fetch out some more o' them trunks!" said Mrs. Bar-

rington with dignity.

"Women is wonderful!" said Ezra as he walked off. "I s'pose there wouldn't be much done if it wa'n't for them! And if there didn't now and then come along s'nthin a leetle too heavy for 'em to manage, a man might go black-

berrying! There-that's all."

We saw the cart drive off, and after taking a final survey of everything within the house, we went out and locked the door and withdrew the key. When would it be put in again? There is a character in shut doors and windows that one has been wont to see open,—where there is no light from within, the light from without falls cheerlessly. We stood silently looking at the lake. It shewed no sympathy for our sadness—the very laugh of the spring-time beamed on it; and the birds—were they heartless in their rejoicing?—only thoughtless, like the rest of the world! Our eyes wandered to the little opening in the woods that marked the foot-path to the Bird's Nest.

"Shall we walk down there mamma?" said Kate.

Mrs. Howard consented; and we went slowly along, thinking, noticing everything, but without a word, till we reached the garden. Everything was in nice order, everything wore its old look of quiet security,—one could not imagine an intruder there. Yet had one been,—we looked at the house and turned sighingly away.

CHAPTER XXXV.

All friendship now decays,
(Believe me this is true.)
Which was not in those days
When this old cap was new.
Old Song.

THE little abode where Ezra Barrington had been settled on our first coming to Glen Luna and which he had retained even when he took charge of the Lea, was on our own land. So much was pleasant. The house itself was nothing extraordinary, though larger than many of its race, and with that full complement of doors and windows which an American farmhouse rarely wants. There was too the unfailing porch, and the low kitchen appendage with a proportionably high chimney; and in close neighbourhood to this apartment appeared a perfect settlement of chickencoops, because any nearer the woods was "so handy to the minks." One or two particularly cross old hens were favoured with separate and retired situations.

The house stood half-way up a thickly wooded and rather steep side-hill, facing one long open vista to the south-west; which parallelogram of clearing embraced the path, a cornfield, a patch of forest, a touch of the lake at its western extremity, and the little church. Further still was the low

cultivated shore on the Moon side.

About the house, besides the soft pasture and here and there a brown stump; was a neat garden. Long open ranks of indian corn went up hill untiringly, while pumpkin vines covered every spare inch of ground with their large leaves and yellow flowers; and cabbages, lettuce, beans, onions, and the common variety of tap-roots, deployed off according to their several uniforms: potatoes were in a distant squad by themselves. A few currant-bushes hanging full of their

reddening fruit, and two or three apple and cherry trees, carried the garden to the edge of the woods. This was at the back of the house,—no vegetables were allowed in front. Marigolds of every shade of colour and fulness, fine variegated ladyslippers, feverfew, bachelor's buttons, canterbury bells, phlox and amaranths, presented a very gay spectacle to a cluster of tall sun-flowers which looked down upon them; and left in pretty, soft relief, an occasional bed of "creepin' Charlie." A single pole of scarlet runners and another of painted ladies represented the aristocracy of the kitchen garden; while on one side an unpretending green vine wandered where it would, because as Mrs. Barrington informed us, the gourds were "such dreadful pretty things for the children to play with."

"The children," strictly speaking, were but two, for

"The children," strictly speaking, were but two, for 'Dency and 'Lisha were well advanced in the growing-up stage. 'Lisha was away in the field with his father; but 'Dency came forth with her mother to meet us, and Benny and little Susan-Jeanette peeped at us from behind the currant-bushes. Coal followed up his good beginning, and displayed a degree of amiable excentricity that completely puzzled Wolfgang. He evidently thought his little canine

host was mad.

We were assigned the eastern division of the house, that being a little the most modern and commodious, and Mrs. Barrington's extreme anxiety for our comfort kept down all notionality on our part. Indeed our notions had had a schooling, and to be safe and comfortable were matters quite independent of mahogany and brussels. Our simple table and chairs looked very pleasant upon Mrs. Barrington's bran new carpet, wherein were all the colours of the rainbow in most un-rainbow-like order; and our books, Kate's harp, and Wolfgang, made us feel at home. On one point alone had we any difficulty, and that was the disposal of the best looking-glass; which to give a finish to our sitting-room now hung between the windows. If there be such things as "moral pocket-handkerchiefs," then was that a moral mirror! a sure antidote to vanity! no such representation of our faces had ever been made before. The eye involuntarily sought something else—and found it. Above the plate, as if to make amends for its sternness, a

ship with the whitest of canvass was at full sail on the brightest of all blue water,—her masts and rigging quite startling with paint and varnish; and overhung as it was with a penthouse of frame, the whole formed a sort of entablature that was distressing to civilized nerves. What should we do with it? or with them? Rather than hurt the kind feeling which placed it there we would have watched the ship's progress all summer, and no indirect coaxing or persuasion could make Mrs. Barrington appropriate such an adornment. "She didn't want it," and "she'd as much rather as could be we should have it"; and nothing saved us at last but the happy discovery that a little set of book-shelves must hang just there and nowhere else!

"If there's anything been forgot or left down yonder, Mrs. Howard," said Ezra Barrington next day, "jus' say so and it sha'n't be there no longer than it'll take me to go and come. And I ain't somebody else," he added with a meaning look, "nor no connection! There sha'n't a living

soul get in but me-without it's 'Lisha."

We had agreed to provide ourselves with sugar and tea and coffee, and to prepare the two last after our own fashion by means of an urn and spirit-lamp; but for all the substantials we were to rely upon our hostess and her cookery. So when it drew near meal-time, 'Dency's hair which not being very long usually stood straight out from its first twist, was carefully secured and decorated with a large carved comb; and with clean apron and hands and white stockings, and new shoes, she came tramping in and out to set our table and spread it with whatever attainable things Mrs. Barrington had thought we should like. In some of the intervals of business Kate and I always gave the table a slight rearrangement, for it was impossible to get 'Dency out of her own style and into ours; and she might have been born and bred a Southerner for the way she left the doors open-she made a perfect avenue for herself from our room to the kitchen.

"'Dency!" her mother would call out from the pyroligneous quarter, "come back and shut that door! now straight!—If I was a girl as big as you be, I'd be

ashamed."

And 'Dency would answer, "Yes ma'am!" and run and shut the doors; but they were open again in five minutes.

Our new way of life had gone on for about a week, when we were honoured by a call from no less a person than

Mrs. Willet.

"Well," she said, "I've found you out you see—dear me! I thought I never should get up that hill!—I couldn't believe my ears when they told me you were gone—O me! Grace my dear, a glass of water. But how comfortable you are here!" she repeated, as between and over sips of water her eyes scrutinized the room. "Why you're as delightfully situated as can be!"

"To be sure!" said Kate. "You didn't think we were going to put ourselves where we should not be comfortable,

Mrs. Willet?"

"But they told me you had left Glen Luna for the summer—and of course—I see you've got your harp here too, Kate."

"What kind of a place did you think we were in?" said

Mrs. Howard laughing.

"Bless me, my dear, how can I tell? how could I tell, I mean. But you're so neat and pretty here!"

"Yes ma'am," said Kate gravely—" we always patronize

dusting-brushes."

"You're not so much further off after all," said Mrs. Willet—"only for this terrible hill."

"You did not walk?"

"Up the hill—I had to leave my carriage at the foot you know. Next time I shall stay there too and send for you to come down,—the youngest legs ought to do the running. Well ain't you surprised to see me?"

"A little," said my stepmother smiling,—"I hardly

thought you would come."

"Why not?" said Mrs. Willet with grave earnestness and the air of repelling an imputation. "What made you think I wouldn't?"

"What made you ask me if I was surprised?"

"You always want to know the reason of everything! Bless me! what noise is that?"

"I think it is 'Dency singing," said Kate with a smile.

"Who's 'Dency?"

"'Dency Barrington—the daughter of our hostess."—

"My dear Mrs. Howard I should think it would annoy you to death! Why do you permit it?"

"It's a free country," said my stepmother laughing.

"But do they often sing so?"

"Pretty often. They are methodists, and very fond of raising their voices."

"But don't you suppose they'd stop if you told them how it troubled you?"

"I am sure they would; but I think I should interfere more with their comfort than they do with mine, -espe-

cially as it seldom troubles me at all."

"I'm sure I couldn't bear it for ten minutes!" said Mrs. Willet, as 'Dency struck up some new and particularly loud variation and all the children joined in. "It goes right through my head!"

"That sweet tune?" said Kate. "Some of the methodist

hymns are so fine that no singing can spoil them."

"But so long as a thing goes through your head my dear, it don't matter whether it's sweet or not. Wellyou're all good-natured I suppose. Now do come and see me very soon,—you must not let yourselves stay up here without exercise. And a little diversion for the mind too. When did you hear from your father?"

"Yesterday," said Kate.

"O, that's pleasant. He is well?"

"Very well."

"Give my regards to him when you write. Now don't forget—Carry says she never can remember a message. And by the way-she would have come with me this morning, but it was just the hour for her ride on horseback. I need not explain it to you my dear Kate-who are so systematic and make such admirable use of your time-you understand it, don't you?"

"Perfectly!" said Kate with sparkling eyes. But they

were beyond Mrs. Willet's ken.

"Yes, I thought so," said she giving Kate a most affectionate kiss. "You must come and see her-come all of you, it'll be a nice walk,—you might come every day as well as not."

"I don't know about that," said I, as I watched Mrs.

Willet's diminishing figure. "I think there would be more than one person tired if we did. 'A nice walk for us'—

who have no carriage at the foot of the hill!"

"It is part of our discipline," said Kate as she turned away from the window. "This would have tried me once! I am thankful that I have grown wiser—that my friends must come up to a higher standard."

"Have you the time of day, Mrs. Howard?" said Mrs. Barrington cautiously opening the door. "He's got a watch, but he keeps it to the field,—I tell him he ought

to get me one. And the clock ain't fixed yet."
"It is just eleven," said my stepmother.

"Well now ain't there anything as you'd like to have for dinner perticular? it don't make no odds to me," said Mrs. Barrington earnestly; "and if there's a thing we kin get you shall have it."

"It makes very little difference to us," said my stepmother. "Don't send Elisha to Wiamee in this hot sun—

give us just what you happen to have."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Barrington, "but there ain't much of anything to day Mrs. Howard—a place gets cleared out once in a while, someways; and now what could you take a likin to? 'cause 'tain't no more trouble to get what you like than what you don't like."

"Don't get anything to-day."

"There ain't anything in the house ma'am, if it wa'n't bread and eggs and strawberries and ham—and Ezra says to me, 'now don't you never give 'em no pork' he says—and I always reckoned as ham and pork was kinder first cousins."

"But we like ham very much, and pork too sometimes," said my stepmother smiling; "and in this weather nothing can be better than strawberries—with your nice bread."

"I don't never get tired o' pork myself," said Mrs. Barrington,—" but it don't seem right to make them eat it as ain't been used it. And I'd send 'Lisha to Mr. Cleaver's, only he's helping his father—but 'Dency kin go. And Ezra would have went to the lake for to ketch some fish, but he said if he did it would be sure to rain afore he'd get back; and there's a dreadful sight of hay down."

And Mrs. Barrington stood looking at us in rather

anxious perplexity.

"We won't eat a thing to-day but bread and butter and strawberries," said Kate laughing—"if you get ever so much, Mrs. Barrington. I'd rather have them than chickens or fish."

"Well of all things!" said the good woman. "But the chickens, Miss Kate!—there ain't a man alive could ketch 'em to-day, for little Benny left the coop undid, and they run right out; and if they once takes a notion to go in the

woods, there's nothing to do but let 'em go."

The pleasantest thing we did that summer was to go to the Bird's Nest: there was an influence there, that was very soothing amid all its sorrowfulness; and if every sight and sound reminded us of what we had lost, they did not speak of the weariness and disturbance of money affairs, nor of the bad side of human nature. All that we had ever known in that little garden was lovely and of good report; and tears there were better than smiles in other places,-more comforting. We loved to sit and talk of the pleasant times that were gone,-to imagine what Miss Easy would have said to us in the troublous times we had lately been through,-how she would have looked -what a relief it would have been to talk out to her: and yet we often felt and said we were glad that our sorrows were hers no longer. And Kate would look at me as with Miss Easy's eyes, and tell me she wished I would wear a brighter face. There was indeed a strange sort of society in that garden,-its very stillness said more than other people's words. To go there was like steadying the confusion of mind and every-day cares, that we might see more clearly the bright light from "the kingdom,"-it was a never-failing quickener of faith and patience. And yet -and yet—there were times when I could hardly bear to go to it, nor to come away when I had gone. It seemed like another parting.

We were gradually learning to do without more things than money,—people fell off from us right and left; and the same persons who two or three years before had invited us constantly to their houses, now asked us once in the season, or not at all. This was no sudden change, it had been working for some time; but when we were at home and all together it was less noticeable, less felt,—neither

had it ever before reached such a point.

Of course we attempted no remedy,—our course was clear. We had but to remain quiet and find our pleasure in things out of gold's domain. And yet it is impossible to see those whom one has liked and trusted even moderately, turn their backs, without some feeling of regret—especially if one is thereby left alone. This was where it touched us,—it shewed us what we had lost. A few years ago we could have borne it better.

Our quondam friends did not quite break with us, but they acted so that we could give them but the little finger of friendship; nor would perhaps have yielded that, but for the longing one has to trust somebody. They were exceeding fond of us whenever we met—but took care to have that as seldom as possible; and prepared though we were for strange behaviour, some of their manœuvres fairly

took us by surprise.

Not long after Mrs. Egerton came to her cottage for the summer, the little Barringtons were electrified one morning by the appearance of a liveried footman in their garden; his gold lace and red facings quite outshining the sun-flowers and cockscombs. As the hill seemed to have affected him even more severely than it had Mrs. Willet, it was perhaps fortunate that his errand was put in writing.

"This is Mrs. Egerton's seal, I know," said Kate as she handed the note to my stepmother, "What can she want

of us?"

"She wants our company to breakfast—on the fourth of July; and 'this is not to ask if we will come, but to say we must.' There, you may read for yourself. I think we can hardly refuse—she will send her carriage for us."

Let be some over her!" said Kate. "But

"I wonder what has come over her!" said Kate. "But it don't matter—I should like to go very much,—it is so

long since we have seen anybody to speak to."

"You see," said Mrs. Howard when she had entrusted the fatigued footman with her answer, "you see my dear Kate it is never best to form a hasty judgment on any subject."

"We had some apparent reason in her case, mamma.

But I will take it back—this invitation has given me real pleasure; and it is given so handsomely too,—so promptly,—a thing is worth twice as much that is done at the proper time."

The fourth of July fell on Wednesday: Monday morn-

ing came, and with it the liveried footman.

"Mrs. Egerton would be happy to have Miss Howard's

company on a drive."

Kate went of course; with an additional touch of wonder at the new state of things; and Mrs. Howard and I went pleasantly on with our work, speculating the while upon the benefits mind and body may gain by the aid of wheels and a good pair of horses.

But "our eldest" looked tired when she came home, and

But "our eldest" looked tired when she came home, and her bonnet-strings were untied with an air of doubtful

satisfaction.

"What do you suppose Mrs. Egerton took me with her for, mamma?"

"Anything but a drive?"

"Anything but that—exactly mamma. I wonder if any body could astonish me after this! But I thought nobody could, before."

"But what is 'this'?" said Mrs. Howard.

"Let me see"—said Kate,—"if I only could tell it as it was told me! Just imagine that Mr. and Mrs. Egerton are taking a walk. And Mr. Egerton says, 'We will ask those Miss Groomes my dear, to our breakfast on the fourth.' And she replies, 'No my dear, I cannot do that—I have already invited our friends the Howards."

Kate stopped to laugh, in spite of herself. "Did she really say that, Katie?" said I.

"She really did, and not in a way that gave it even outside grace. It was how she had given him this answer, and how he had thereupon expressed his regret—think of her telling me that! 'But my dear,' says Mr. Egerton, 'why not have them all?' And then she told him, 'O no! she couldn't have any more to breakfast, for she was not out of mourning yet.' What a farce it is!"

"And what said you?"

"That we would not come—decidedly enough! And she made a show of objecting; but as it was just what she

meant I should say, it was only a show. I don't care about the thing itself—we can do without this little piece of pleasure as we have done without others—but mamma, why do people play fast and loose with us? They are not obliged to take any notice of us if they don't choose to;—and no neglect can equal such notice. Now mamma," she added, kneeling down by her, "you shall not look grave about it!"

"I am very sorry you should both be disappointed."
"Are you disappointed dear Gracie?" said Kate.

"A little—I sha'n't be by to-morrow."

"I am very sorry too! for that. But we shall not think of it mamma,—I was a little annoyed to-day—I believe

human nature can't always help it."

"We have better friends left than Mrs. Egerton could be, dear Kate—that is one comfort. There are some few bright spots where the eye may rest, some few people that may be trusted, and who would give a great deal to see you."

"They make the rest look all the darker," said Kate as she rose and turned away. "Well, I had as lief know what the world is made of. There was some loveable stuff about us when we came here, but there is none now."

"Did Mrs. Egerton say nothing else Katie?"

"Not much—O yes, she said it was only postponing the pleasure,—she should send for us again very soon."

"She won't get us, if she does," said I.

A virtuous resolution—which was not to be tried. The season passed, and Mrs. Egerton went back to town, but no further invitation was heard of; and the footman in livery became to the little Barringtons but as a thing that was. Our trials of patience were more enduring,—general invitations were at a discount.

"Do come and drink tea with us whenever you can find time and inclination. You know our tea-hour—it never

varies."

"Send some day for my carriage—it is at your service."

"Now won't you both come and spend the day with me before I go?" said Mrs. Osborne.

"With great pleasure," said we; and there the matter

ended.

"Why really ma'am," said Kate to another "friend", who "wished she could tempt us to visit her in town,"—"I am very easily tempted." The lady took leave immediately.

Some such remark and a single visit, satisfied our oldest

acquaintances.

We were not troubled by these things—they were not pleasant, and did not tend to raise our spirits; but we grew quiet and grave, not discontented. Very quiet! most of all when we chanced to come in contact with "the world of stuffed clothes suits." How quietly we passed through the throng at our little church! as if we had been invisible, —sometimes without a greeting from anybody. Indeed we almost ceased to look for one, for why should those speak to us on Sunday who would not return our visits in the week? Nor did they. A family of old acquaintances in the pew behind us might have been the pew itself, for unconsciousness of our presence; and very soon they might have been that for all we cared about them. One thought of Miss Easy was worth the whole congregation.

Yet were the days not without pleasure. We were steadily busy and even happy,—happy perhaps because busy; for time to remember is not always desirable. We copied a great deal for Mr. Phibbs, and coloured as much,—maps and law-papers came and went by the quantity; and the knowledge that we were earning something was very comforting. We had bright letters too from Mr. Howard, and most brightening ones from Mr. Rodney, and now and then a cheering visit from Mr. Ellis. Their breath of hope and faith was not lost, it applied a strong brace to

our weariness; and Kate would often say,

"I cannot imagine what people do that have no trust in the particular providence of God,—who look to nothing

beyond this world!"

And then sometimes—when we had been very hard at work, or had met with some unusually "cold shoulder",—the weariness would prevail; and we felt almost like Noah on Mt. Ararat—safe from the deluge, but with a world of emptiness around us.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Some murmur, when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue;
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

TRENCH.

"THE children's been out in the woods after flowers," said Mrs. Barrington as she brought in an immense bunch of July spoils; "and I put some of 'em together, if you'd be pleased to accept of 'em."

"O thank you!" I said—"they are beautiful! but you've given us too many. I am very much obliged to you Mrs.

Barrington."

"I'm sure you're entirely welcome," she answered.

"But I'm afraid you have robbed the children."

"O they've got oceans!"

"Why here are little green huckle-berries," said Kate.

"Them's bear-berries," said Mrs. Barrington. "The children takes a notion to pick 'em because they hang so curious-like onto the bush. I think a dreadful sight of them when they're ripe."

"They are very pretty indeed. What's this great white

cluster?"

"O Kate!" I said, "don't you know that?"

"It's only elder-blows Miss Kate. I thought they was all gone by this time, but the children found 'em somewheres. He says they're nothing but weeds, but I tell him they're just as pretty as a flower."

"And so sweet too! Where did they find these pretty

spikes of white buds?"

"That grows down in the mash—beyond the pine wood. Clethry, some folks calls it, and some calls it white bush;—and some again calls it sweet pepper bush!—I don't know no name for it myself. And that other white and pink they call prince's pine—Ezra says it beats all how it got in our woods. And this here is patridge-berry, and that 'ere streaked leaf is rattlesnake leaf."

"Why do they call it so?" said I.

"Well I don't know, Miss Grace—if it ain't because its so checked and 'spotted, like a snake,—the flower's pretty, too."

"There are no snakes here?" said Mrs. Howard.

"None that have got pison into them. But where we lived afore we come here, there was the dreadfullest passel of 'em!—rattlesnakes—and pilots!—I hadn't no good of my life for fear of the children. There was the most young pilots killed just round the house! But I never see none here—only a black snake,—and I threw a stone at it, but it cried so that I had mercy onto it and let it go. I don't know as I did right."

"But they are harmless," said Kate.

"They say they don't never bite no one," said Mrs. Barrington,—"but they'll take and chase a person sometimes."

"Did you ever see a rattlesnake yourself?"

"Why my, yes! I recollect of one day—and it had been raining, and had cleared off, and the sun was 'most down,—and I heard a great noise amongst the chickens. And I telled Mr. Barrington he'd better go look after 'em—for he wasn't well that day, and staid home. So he said he guessed it wa'n't nothing, howsever he ketched up a club and went, and there sure enough was two of the little chickens a lyin' dead and right next to 'em this great ugly beast! and my husband he struck at it and killed it. I don't doubt but it was six feet long—and it had ten rattles to it. But there's a kind o' root—snake-root they call it, that'll cure any sort o' bite,—it don't grow round here. I guess I'm like the old woman Ezra tells about," said Mrs. Barrington breaking off with a laugh;—"she didn't know when she got through and so she begun again. But you're

as welcome as can be to the flowers, Miss Grace, and the

children kin fetch 'em every day."

We arranged our flowers, the snake story giving fair subject of debate the while, and then seated ourselves to map out a parcel of lands in Wisconsin that were to delude some unwary speculator; talking of matters and things and enjoying the elder and partridge-berry fragrance which filled the room; and after dinner we were still at our work with pencil and brush, when we heard a step, and a portion of the sun's rays on their way to us were suddenly cut off. Our windows were as near the ground outside as they were within; therefore when we looked up it was no cause of surprise to see Mr. Ellis's elbows upon the window-sill while his head was advanced some inches nearer.

"Well," he said—"good afternoon. Not round the

world yet?"

"Not yet," said Kate smiling.

"They say a woman can't have too much arithmetic," remarked Mr. Ellis,—"I don't know how it is as to geography, but I suppose something depends upon the way she studies it. Now if a friend of mine stood where I do, I make no doubt he would tell me as he once did when I asked him what he had seen at a certain place, 'I have seen a great many things I cannot help, Mr. Ellis.'"

"You might look in at almost any window and say that,"

said Kate laughing.

"There are some things here I wouldn't help if I could. Well—Don't you want to try a little measuring with a two-foot rule? instead of that half-way thing of ivory?"

"Measuring what, Mr. Ellis?"

"The road from here to the top of Pillimaquady hill."

"O—yes, we should like a walk very much. But what is up there? I thought Pillimaquady had only engrossed all the stones of the region?"

"Yes, it has a good many, but it's got a house on it too."

"A house?" said Mrs. Howard.

"Why I suppose that little pile of logs is as much in the genus house as its inhabitants are in the genus man."

"Who can live up there, Mr. Ellis?"

"A family Miss Kate who know so much about hard times, that many other people seem ignorant in comparison,—that's why I want you to see them. It's well to find out that we don't know everything, and when I find myself a little proud of my own acquaintance with trials, I go up there."

Kate smiled with a full understanding of his words, and

we were soon ready to set out.

"I'll try to bring your young ladies safe home ma'am," said Mr. Ellis, "but I won't promise when. Pillimaquady is every inch a hill, and lets himself down for nobody."

Not for us, certainly. The road which gradually ascending led us through corn and hay fields to the foot of the hill, there changed to a little thread of a path of most steep and unequal grading. Cultivation had ventured no further; and the wild plants and rough footing which had been banished from so much of the neighbouring country, here kept their stronghold. The trees grew in what fashion it liked them best; and thick beds of wintergreen and mouse-ear and squaw-vine luxuriated in their shade. Sweet-fern aromatized the air with its pretty cut leaves, while the beautiful laurels in their variety of growth and colour might have appropriated Cowper's lines.

"This red And of an humbler growth, the other tall, And throwing up into the darkest gloom Of neighbouring cypress or more sable yew Her silver globes."

And the intermediate shades blended and contrasted with these two extremes, in a way that as the French say, "left

nothing to desire."

Stones grew more plenty and flowers more scarce as we proceeded; and over rocks and moss-beds and little springy places which even at that season kept their dampness, we wandered and wound about, till we reached a sort of landing-place some four-fifths of the way up. We saw no house yet, but the path was more level, and the near cackling of a hen spoke of settlers. Then appeared a clothes-line stretched from tree to tree, and supporting a red flannel shirt and two or three nondescript articles; then the aforesaid hen and her companions; the pig-pen, and finally the house. I put the pig-pen first, for that it was in order of approach,—standing at the very path-edge, and rendering

"the right of way" a matter for litigation. A pen it was not, in strictness, unless when the pigs chose to lie behind their logs and imagine themselves shut up,—generally they preferred lying outside and looking in. A rail-fence in two parts made an equally doubtful attempt at shutting off the rough courtyard, which ran down to a wet, boggy bit of ground, full of alders and other plants that will still be

paddling.

The house was but a regular arrangement of back-logs, with two or three rickety board steps, and windows that were as little thorough-going as the rest of the concern; the steps were at present occupied by a marvellously clean and nice-looking little cat whom the first glimpse of us banished to unknown regions. The dark woods closed in behind the house and skirted the far side of the courtyard; and from the gable next us, a disjointed stove-pipe whose inclination was to quit the concern, sent up a lazy indication of smoke, —looking as much like that which comes from a chimney, as a good open fireplace resembles its iron imitators.

In front of the rickety steps a little girl about ten years old was jumping the rope: dressed as to substantials in a stuff petticoat. For ornament she wore a string of beads, and a muslin waist the skirt of which had once covered the petticoat, but now hung in shortened and narrow fringestrips over the dark stuff; while her stockings and pantalettes were but of the same material as Prince Vortigern's vest—unpainted. But if rags and mud claimed the whole of the body, the face belonged to nothing but fun; and the child and her fringed habiliments took flying leaps over the rope, in a style that quite distanced the sports of Quilp's boy.

A little cur of a dog started up to bark at us, but seeing Mr. Ellis's stick he dropped ears and tail, and walked round

to greet Wolfgang and Dec.

We were endeavouring to pick our way over the stones which clogged the fence-gap, when the house door opened, and a woman who had seen the shady side of life as well as of forty, came out. Her face was bandaged with a handkerchief, and a muslin cap covered her head.

"Why laws a me!" she said. "You baint come all the way up here agin Mr. Ellis? well that's wonderful clever

o' you, for sartain. And these young ladies—pretty girls! to come so far to see a body!"

"How are you to-day Mrs. Flinter?" replied our com-

panion.

"I ain't just well," she answered,—"I was wonderful bad with the teethache night afore last, and my face are as big as two, yet. Why ain't that Mr. Collingwood's dog?"

"Yes," said Mr. Ellis.

"He ain't to the Lea is he sir?"

"No, but Wolfgang is spending the summer with Mrs.

Howard."

"Why I want to know!" said Mrs. Flinter,—"poor feller! poor feller! Come in sir, won't you—come in Miss Howards. Well I'm wonderful glad to get a sight o' that 'ere dog!—poor feller! come right in, too—you sha'n't stay out while this here house has got a roof onto it. Loisy, go straight off and fetch him a bit o' bread."

"I don't believe he's very hungry," said Kate,—" he had

his dinner before we came away."

"Do tell!" said Mrs. Flinter; "but maybe he'll eat sun-

'thin. Poor old feller! I wish it war plum cake!"

And Wolfgang took the dingy bread in his white teeth, rather than to hurt her feelings by a refusal,—very much as his master would have done in similar circumstances.

The indoor look of things was not out of keeping with the exterior, though there was rather more arrangement and neatness; but in justice to Mrs. Flinter it must be allowed that extreme poverty and half a dozen children, do not tend to the nice ordering of a log cabin. The room into which we were ushered had a prevailing odour of tobacco and cooking,—not the pleasant smell of good food well cooked, but that sickly, unwholesome atmosphere which marks deficiencies on both sides of the stew-pan. There was no appearance of dinner however, but the stove, which for want of a third leg rested on a pile of bricks, still spoke of a recent fire.

A sort of bed in one corner held an oldish, infirm woman, who was covered with a very gay specimen of patchwork: a few wooden and splinter chairs stood about in the way, a few children ditto; while over the table hung a little looking-glass, and over that a bunch of fresh asparagus. The

window by the bed was partially shielded by a white curtain, but there seemed small need of it; for on the outside a large hemlock shot up towards the blue sky, far beyond the ridge-pole of the little cabin, and its lower branches rubbed and scratched against every pane of glass within their reach, forming a perfect barrier to eyes without or within. Through one breach in the window a curious shoot had even found its way into the room, and now hung forth its feathery green foliage in singular contrast to everything else there.

Mr. Ellis walked up to the sick woman, who seemed overjoyed at the sight of Wolfgang, and Mrs. Flinter busied herself in clearing away the children and picking out the best chairs for us.

"What is your name?" said Kate to a little tow mop

in the corner, near which she had seated herself.

The child looked gloomily up, disclosing a dirty face

below the mop, but spoke not.

"Charley! where's your manners?" said his sister Loisy in a sharp voice, and for the first time removing her eyes from us. "Take your fingers out of your mouth and behave! His name's Charley, Miss."

"I h'aint got a thing to give you to eat!" said our hostess in a disturbed tone—" Mary Jane! leave the lady's dress be!—we don't never make much count o' cake up

here, nor pies nother."

"O we don't want anything to eat," said Kate,—"I should like a glass of water if you please Mrs. Flinter."

"I'm wonderfully on't for glasses too," said Mrs. Flinter,—"the children's for ever and the day after a breakin 'em! But there's water enough, if so be you wouldn't mind drinkin' out o' the dipper."

"A teacup would do perfectly," said Kate; and out of two most unmated specimens of crockery we at last satis-

fied our thirst.

"What excellent water!" said I.

"It's good it is," said Mrs. Flinter, "for there ain't nothin' else to be had here for the asking."

"Yes, you must have to bring things a great way; but

I suppose the other road is smoother."

"There ain't but one road, and that's where you come

up. He works to Wiamee and backs the weighty things home o' nights, and the children just fetch the rest day-times."

"Not up that little steep path?"

"There ain't no other," repeated Mrs. Flinter. "Why laws a me! Miss Howards, little 'Minadab, that ain't but knee-high to a mouse, 'll fetch along sich a bag of meal! you wouldn't believe!"

"He is older than this one?" I said, looking at the mop. "Well yes—but Charley's wonderful strong too, when

he's a mindter."

"And them's Squire Howard's datas," said the sick woman looking from Mr. Ellis to us. "Many's the time I've heerd tell on 'em! There ain't much up here worth comin' to see," she continued with a smile as we moved our chairs to the bed-foot,—"folks on the mounting lives curous ways sometimes, Miss Howard."

"It must be rather hard living up here indeed," said Kate's gentle voice, which had all the sweetness of sympathy; "I wish we could do something to make it pleas-

anter."

"That's just what you've done a'ready," said the woman. "Visiters is scuss in these days, and it's a pleasure to see 'em—when they're good ones. Sayin' nothin' o' you all, that 'ere dog's better than a doctor."

And she turned herself to look again at Wolfgang, who sat gravely by her side as if he had been the very gentle-

man referred to.

"Mother thinks a wonderful sight of him," said Mrs. Flinter, "'cos he used to come here with young Mr. Collingwood."

The very name brought a flush of delight to the pale

cheeks of the sick woman.

"If ever a blessed angel come into a place like this!" she said, clasping her hands energetically, "it was when he did! O sir, we was poor indeed till he come to tell us how 'we might be made rich'!—And now," she added, "I don't want for anything!"

Nobody answered her—nobody could,—Kate's head had sunk on her hands, and for a few moments we sat in abso-

lute silence. Then Mr. Ellis rose to go.

"I never come up here," he said, "without learning what does me good. You see Miss Kate, there is 'neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all!'

'Life's poor distinctions vanish here'-

Goodbye Mrs. Barstow-'hold fast that which thou hast received, that no man take thy crown,' for 'he that shall come will come, and shall not tarry."

"'Even so'!" she answered looking brightly at him;

and then turning to us she said,

"It's a wonderful pleasure to see you-maybe you'd

come again?"

"We will certainly," said Kate, "and bring Wolfgang." The wet eyelashes and trembling lips gave full security for the promise.

Mrs. Barstow smiled thankfully, and squeezed our hands with all the good will in the world; and then Mrs. Flinter

followed us to the door.

"How does the doctor say your mother is?" inquired

Mr. Ellis when we were out.

"He don't just say sir-she's pretty much of a muchness,-she don't get no weller, and she don't get no worser."

"Mind you send to me if you want anything," was his

parting salutation, and we walked away.

It seemed as if that road home led us through all the shades of human life. Now, the way softened and smoothed -here there was an extra flower, and there a finer tree,then came the farm lands in all the beauty of slant sunbeams and fine crops, the work of hard labour; and then the Lea grounds, where toil had been but was not nowat least for the owner. We turned from them, and mounted our own hill with surely not an ungrateful perception of our own midway situation and prospects.

"Now Mr. Ellis," said Kate, speaking for almost the first time since we left Pillimaquady; "will you promise to apply to us if we can do any good? our hands might

be useful, to say nothing of mamma's head."
"Well I don't know," said Mr. Ellis looking kindly at her and then at me.—"People that have so much to do in

Wisconsin can't have much time for the home department. Have you had a pleasant walk?"

" Very!"-

"Then sleep sound to-night,—you look as if you needed it."

So wore on the summer. Two or three times Mr. Howard came to spend a day with us, but travelling was too expensive to be much indulged in,—we were obliged to be content with the cheaper intercourse of pen and ink. The first set of lectures had given place to a second, but it was to end with August, my father wrote, and then we hoped to be all together again. He had an offer too, or hopes of it, of an agency in our neighbourhood that would enable him to stay at home; and he was trying very hard to dispose of as much of the Glen Luna lands as would pay off our debts and rid us of all farms and farm cares.

For Mr. Howard had proved to his own satisfaction, that

his niche was not in the temple of Ceres.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Richer than doing nothing for a bauble; Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk. Shakspeare.

"THERE is no money in this letter, after all," said Mrs. Howard as she laid down one that had just come from my father.

"How does that happen, I wonder," said Kate.

"O the old way—poor people cannot be paid until rich people think it convenient."

"Did you want it particularly just now?" said Kate, in a

sort of abstracted aside from the letter.

"I wished very much to give Mrs. Barrington some, and we want tea and sugar, and Grace wants a pair of shoes."

"Never mind mamma, I'll mend these."

"Are we quite out of tea?"

"No, there's a little left, and we have plenty of coffee-

the rest of the sugar had better be kept for that."

"We shall have to go back to our old economy in the sweet line," said Kate. "I think he is very tired of being

away from home, mamma."

"No," said Mrs. Howard answering the last words with a sigh, "I have no intention of going back to that sort of economy,—I have grown wiser. Instead of struggling to live along by such shifts in the hope that things will mend, the way is to set to and mend them."

"I am sure you have done your part, mamma. But can't

we 'live along' till the next letter comes?"

"The only thing I care about," said my stepmother, "is our board,—I cannot bear to be behindhand with that.

And you see your father will not be home so soon as he

expected."

"But Mrs. Barrington will wait, mamma—it won't make much difference to them,—it can't, for we cost them very little; and the money will be just as good when it comes. I thought there was some left of the last supply?"

"A few dollars,—but I don't quite like to leave ourselves

without any. Perhaps I had better give her that."-

We had been talking while the breakfast-table was clearing away,—making a long enough pause in the important places for our little handmaid to load her tray and walk off with it. The table-cloth had hardly disappeared before Mrs. Barrington came hurrying in, quite out of breath with her own eagerness.

"'Dency is so hateful!" she said, - " she won't never shut

the doors!"

We looked up in some surprise, but Mrs. Barrington's face was the very picture of smiling good-humour. It was only a Pickwickian hateful.

"I didn't know they were open," said my stepmother.

"They wasn't all—only the kitchen door; but he takes on so about grandmother's pipe,—he says if ever a thing went every place it was t'bacca."

"It very seldom comes here," said Kate.

"Grandmother kint do without her pipe, neither," pursued Mrs. Barrington. "I'll fetch some yarn the first time I go to Wiamee—she don't smoke not nigh so much when she has knittin' work. Why Mrs. Howard, when she ain't got nothin else to do, she'll smoke three sixpenny papers—that's eighteen-pence worth in a week! And I do try to keep the doors shut, but the children has no mind to anything."

My stepmother assured her that the pipe gave us no annoyance; and then according to her former intention she offered Mrs. Barrington part payment of what was owing her. If it had been labelled as the last we had, Mrs. Bar

rington could not have refused it more decidedly.

"I ain't got no use for it now," she said putting her hands behind her, "and I couldn't do no less than spend it. By and by, when it draws on to winter, I'll likely want to get some things for the children."

"But you may as well take it now," said my stepmother,

"and then you'll have it when you want it -maybe I

shouldn't, just at the right time."

"It won't make no odds then," said Mrs. Barrington,—
"if I was to take it now Mrs. Howard, I couldn't keep it.
Ezra says dollars never stood still on top o' sich a hill, and he don't know where to find 'em when they get to the bottom, he says, nor h'ain't got nothin' to show for 'em neither. And he couldn't keep 'em, no more. My husband says he knows I make holes in his pockets instead of mending 'em, for he finds more every day, he says, and I tell him it's him makes and I mend."

"I think you could manage to keep it," said Mrs. How-

ard smiling, "and I would much rather you should."

"Yes ma'am," said Mrs. Barrington, in assent to my stepmother's intentions but not at all to her request. "But my! there's no tellin'!—it beats all how money goes. There's little Benny asked his father yesterday to give him a sixpen', and he didn't have one as it fell out, however he giv him a fivepen'. And Benny he went off to school, and he giv his fivepen' for five apples to one of the play boys. Simple child! His father said if he ever knowed him to do sich a heedless act again, he didn't know but he should whip him."

A startling rap at the door interrupted the conversation. "Well of all things!" exclaimed Mrs. Barrington; and she hastily ran out shutting our door behind her. The thin boards kept out sight but not sound.

"Good morning," said a familiar voice. "Where's the antecedent to the masculine pronoun Mrs. Barrington?"

"Sir?" was the reply.
"I say where is he?"

"O—" said Mrs. Barrington, who knew a pronoun when she heard it—" my! he ain't to home Mr. Carvill."

"And in which of the forty-nine agricultural departments

shall I find him ?"

"No sir," repeated Mrs. Barrington. "He's away to mill with a load o' wheat,"

"Confound the wheat!" said Mr. Carvill. "When will

he be back?"

"I don't know sir, it can't be long,—he didn't hardly get his breakfast afore he started, and he's only went to mill, and then to Squire Brown's to tell him about the hay, and then to Wiamee for the ox-chain."

"And everywhere else afterwards, I suppose."

"He said he calculated to plough this afternoon," said Mrs. Barrington, as if that held out some slight hope of Ezra's coming home before night.

"I calculate he won't," said Mr. Carvill. "Well—I may as well wait awhile. I suppose I can go in here as usual."

"Stop sir, if you please!" exclaimed Mrs. Barrington as

Mr. Carvill's impatient foot crossed the passage.

"I'm going to stop, till Mr. Barrington comes. What's the matter? is the room whitewashing or are all the children asleep in it? I won't wake them up—it will do well

enough—I want nothing but a chair."

If Mr. Carvill had never been surprised before, he was when he had thus ushered himself into our sitting-room. Astonishment or extraordinary self-command suppressed even his usual tokens of feeling, and he stood not only motionless but silent; while Mrs. Barrington's distressed face in the passage, touched off the scene so that we were very near bursting into a laugh.

My stepmother was the first to speak.

"Here is a chair Mr. Carvill," she said,—"if that is all

you want we can supply you."

"Hard to tell what a man wants when he's got too much," said Mr. Carvill abstractedly, as he bowed in answer, while Mrs. Barrington quietly closed the door.

"I hope I need not assure you Mrs. Howard, that the idea of ladies being so tired at the foot of this hill that they had to come up to rest, never entered my head." And then crossing the room to where we sat, he said,

"Young ladies, I have had an apology in my pocket for the last six months directed to you. I hope the original lustre is not so dimmed that you will refuse to receive it?"

"I hope not sir," said Kate quietly.

"Well you shall judge," said Mr. Carvill, "for here it

is. As first,

I was provoked—secondly, in a passion, thirdly, impolite, fourthly, penitent.

Now will you and Miss Grace give me a receipt in full? Or if either lady felt herself particularly aggrieved—perhaps—I believe that might be so—I will with pleasure give my apology a special direction. How does the case stand Miss Howard?"

"You know Mr. Carvill," said Kate, colouring a little but still speaking with the same quiet steadiness, "the essence of an offence lies in the intention. No one can

answer such a question but yourself."

"Never answer questions—to myself nor other people," said Mr. Carvill looking not at all displeased. "Am I to have a receipt for this 'essence'?—whatever it was."

"Certainly!" said Kate smiling, "though one of your items is a little indistinct, Mr. Carvill,—but for your good

decyphering we should have been puzzled."

"Shake hands then," he said with one of his peculiar looks which rather indicated than expressed a smile, "and that will deepen the impression. And now I will correct my last mistake as far as possible, by bidding you mille fois adieu!"

"Our chairs are quite at your service, Mr. Carvill," said my stepmother,—"if you wish to wait for any one you had better sit down. I think Mrs. Barrington has given up all her spare rooms to us."

"Rooms!" he said.

"Yes," said my stepmother, "we are living here this summer, for safe keeping during Mr. Howard's absence."

"Living here!—on top of Jack's bean!"

"No," said I laughing, "we are not at the top yet, only

'as high as the house.'"

"There is nothing left for me but Mrs. Barrington's 'well of all things!" said Mr. Carvill. "Absolutely quitted the Moon for the stars!"

"I hope Mrs. Carvill is well?" said my stepmother.

"I hope so too ma'am, but at present I am living in a state of single blessedness; and the two days which have rolled over my head since I left Mrs. Carvill, have not sufficiently aroused her anxiety to make her write to me. Of course the only relief to my mind lies in the contemplation of the telegraph wires. Au revoir! I see Jack has come."

Whether Mr. Carvill thought his character as a gentleman had been somewhat jeoparded, or whether the small portion of Collingwood in him was touched by our reverses, he certainly seemed to desire friendly terms; and a few days after his involuntary visit he sent us a brace of ducks, one of which wore round its leg this label:

"A continuation of the last item."

Ezra Barrington delivered them without a word; but upon my stepmother's charging him with her thanks, he gave one of his uncompromising grunts, and remarked that "'twa'n't a millenium if folks did once in a while have common sense,—the only wonder was they didn't get it oftener."

"You will not forget my message?" said Mrs. Howard.
"Well—" said Ezra, "I do' know as I kin,—it's stowed away in my back settlements—safe enough I guess. The

thing is whether I kin ever get it out!"

The loveliest of September weather had set in,-bright, fresh days, and cool nights that very soon touched up our Down in the valley the trees yet laughed at it, except now and then a sensitive butternut whose "yellow leaf" came upon small provocation; but on the higher ground the fall colours began to come out beautifully. It was as if Autumn took her stand upon the hills and there unfurled her banners as a signal for all nature to bow subjection. Now might be seen a cluster of maples assuming the royal colours at first in a mere cockade or favour,—one branch stretching out over the road its crimson leaves, while the rest of the tree remained unchanged. Then a group of loval oaks came out in the darkest red, from the top leaf to the lowest branch that held consultation with the maples. The white oaks chose to appear in orange, and the hickories in bright yellow—as if liberty poles were worth gilding; while all the militia-sumachs and brambles and cornus and buck-thorns came hurrying in, wearing what uniforms they could pick up-green spotted with red or striped with black, or leaves that were indeed of one colour, but so deficient in leafets that it reminded one of,

[&]quot;Upon one foot he had one boot, And t'other in his hand sir."

The evergreens stood out in stout rebellion; only the arbor-vitæ assumed a sprinkling of brown leaves for a time—and then dropped them. But how fast the other trees came in! after the example of a few leaders, and the persuasion of a sharp frost or two. The season was unusually cold,—summer had ended with the name of it, and the fall days were not idle. We began to think it high time for us to be at home and established for the winter. Still my father came not; and as he was staying away for the means to stay at home, we were forced to be content. Our letters were an interchange of patience and quiet waiting, though we were not less weary of the separation than Mr. Howard, and though summer dresses were in strong need of successors.

We had taken a little money and a long walk one day to try what the Wiamee stores could furnish, and were returning under the full conviction that an empty purse never found much anywhere, when the distance was suddenly occupied by a great cloud of dust. Of course we turned out for the carriage!—but the carriage was neighbourly and stopped.

"How d' do?" said Mrs. Egerton's hat and feathers, (the wind blew away the most of her voice,) "been walking?—

going home?"

We made answer by a comprehensive yes.

"Well get in here and I'll take you home. Stephen! let

down the steps."

The footman obeyed, and a scornful little bronze boot drew itself away from the open coach-door. The silk dress to match was taken equal care of.

"Come!" said the lady,-"jump in!"

But having eaught sight of at least two Miss Willets in

the carriage, Mrs. Howard declined.

"There's plenty of room," said Mrs. Egerton—"we can sit close you know—Cary and Amelia will take Kate between them, and—O Michael take care of those horses! Eh!"

The silk dress received another little expressive twitch,

and the horses danced.

"Thank you Mrs. Egerton," said my stepmother with hard-won gravity,—"we had rather walk."

"Well I must have one of you. Come Grace—I shall be very much hurt if you don't."

And Mrs. Howard and Kate fairly put me in-not be-

cause I was wanted but because I was tired.

For a few minutes the Miss Willets found full occupation in surveying me, whom they had hardly seen since I was a child. During Mrs. Willet's first summers at the Moon, they had been at boarding-school. From appearances I judged that they had never seen a calico dress, nor a tartan shawl, nor probably a straw bonnet in October; but comforting myself with the proverb "that dress is best which best fits me," I leaned back in the carriage in a very equable state of mind.

"Then you won't go to Greenleaf's Aunt Egerton!—" exclaimed Miss Amelia suddenly. "How provoking!"

"Why yes my dear—I think we can. Are you in any

hurry to get home Grace?"

Miss Willet looked as if the question were a conventional absurdity, and I answered,

"No ma'am,"

And felt that I wished Greenleaf's were at the distance of just half the daylight that remained of that first of October.

"Pull the string my dear," said Mrs. Egerton, "and

give your orders,—he knows where the place is."

The place was a little nest of hot-houses in "a most chosen plot of fertile land"; with a fair south-eastern exposure, and sheltering high ground and evergreens towards the cold regions. I had been there years before, when we first came to Glen Luna, but I now went under new auspices. I was desired to get out of the carriage, and then I walked quietly in after the two Miss Willets who fluttered after their aunt as close as possible. Once in, I could spare their attentions and bestow mine upon the flowers; but Mrs. Egerton needed me.

"My dear Grace, I am going into this little office to speak to Mr. Greenleaf about my garden. Will you come

with me? I never like to go anywhere alone."

The head man sat in his office writing letters.

"I am afraid we interrupt you sir" said Mrs.

"I am afraid we interrupt you sir," said Mrs. Egerton politely, and taking a chair.

Mr. Greenleaf bowed,—it might be in assent to either her words or action. He looked up at the lady and down at his paper, and then moved his pen a little way off and held it over the inkstand.

"I want to see about a gardener for my little place in the spring."

"Where's that?"

"Down at the Moon—Mr. Egerton's place—you perhaps know where it is?"

No, Mr. Greenleaf did not,—he knew where the Moon

was well enough.

"Well anybody can tell you. Now what time in the spring should the garden be made?"

"You want me to send a man?" said Mr. Greenleaf.

'Yes—a very good one."

I don't employ any others. What sort of ground is it?"

"What sort of ground?" said Mrs. Egerton looking blank.

"Well what soil? Now the Moon gardens is mostly loom—sandy loom, as good as can be,—but if you say your place is further back there might happen some clay in it, or nearer the lake more sand again. And on that it turns you see—some'll work a week or maybe two weeks earlier than others."

"Work!" said Mrs. Egerton. "But Mr. Egerton will pay the man just what he asks—if he is willing to work

early we should like it much better."

"No, no!" said Mr. Greenleaf, "it's the ground I'm talking about! It's friz up in the winter you see—and wet, and it won't work till the frost gets out, and it comes in—grows meller like. And some ground comes in sooner than others, and after all it depends a great deal on the season."

Mrs. Egerton looked absolutely mystified.

"Don't you understand?" said the gardener with a despairing appeal to me.

"O yes," said I smiling.

"Well send him when you like," said Mrs. Egerton— "I don't know anything about it. What's the first thing to be planted?"

"'Pends upon what you're going to have. If you'll just

make out a list I'll see and have 'em in the ground in time."

"But I don't know the name of a single thing! O yes —we want endive,—and cresses—Mr. Egerton's so fond

of them for breakfast."

"Marvin," said Mr. Greenleaf to a young apprentice, "just hand out some of them catalogues." And as Mrs. Egerton went to the counter Mr. Greenleaf returned to his

letter with a feeling of relief.

"Asparagus," said Mrs. Egerton. "We've got that, but it does not bear well. How ought it to be managed? ours has been allowed to run up to seed this summer—will it ever get over it?"

"Let it run up and cut it down close," said Mr. Green-

leaf in a parenthesis.

Mrs. Egerton looked at him hopelessly.

"Beans we must have of course—and everything else that's good,—just put in what you can—and radishes. What time do you plant them? What time will they be good to eat?"

"Somewheres in March, if you force 'em," said Marvin.

"Why how can you force them? But dear me! we sha'n't be here in March—I might have them sent down—they'd be fresh and so much better than we get in town. Couldn't they be sent?"

"How fur?"

"To Philadelphia."

"Cheaper to buy 'em there," said Marvin rather contemptuously.

"Well I shall leave it all to Mr. Greenleaf. O the

raspberry bushes need something done to them."

"I guess I'll send a man along to-morrow to see to it," said the gardener; and with a good-morning that was the concentration of suavity Mrs. Egerton carried me back into the greenhouse.

"Now my dear Grace," said she, "just choose out any

of these plants for yourself."

And while she was giving whispering orders to the man in attendance about a bouquet, I walked up and down and looked at the plants. Might I choose one? There were tiny little geraniums and roses—three inches of sweetness could not cost much-and what a treasure it would be! little cuttings, just struck and potted off,-I half selected one, I half asked its price, but when Mrs. Egerton said

"What have you chosen?" I said, "Nothing ma'am." "O well choose something."

She walked off and so did I, into a room filled with

plants in full flower.

"See here," said Mrs. Egerton pointing out a most exquisite china rose, loaded with its loveliest of all flowers, "ain't that beautiful?"

My answer was very warm.

"I've a great mind to get it for your mother! do you think she would like to have it? or would you?"

"O don't get it for me," I said.

Mrs. Egerton stood looking at the rose, and I was imagining the glow it would cast over our little plain sitting-room.

"I shouldn't know how to get it to her, after all," she

Another pause, and I stole furtive glances at the large placard,

"Flowers and plants sent anywhere within ten miles."

"Well I believe we must leave it for to-day," said Mrs. Egerton—"will this grow in a garden?" taking up some ground-pine from the bouquet-table.

"No ma'am."

"What a pity! Come girls"-She paused outside the door.

"You haven't got anything now, Grace."

"That's no matter, ma'am."

"It's too bad to bring you up here for nothing-but I'm

so dreadfully tired! Well get in."

The carriage rolled smoothly on, and my thoughts fled away to the few bright spots in the world that said human nature was not all alike.

"My dear Grace," said Mrs. Egerton as we stopped at the foot of the hill, "you look tired."
"A little, ma'am."

"I wish we could drive to the door. Are you afraid to go up the hill alone?"

"No ma'am," I said with a sudden feeling that would have braved anything.

"Goodbye then—I would walk up with you, but I'm so tired. Give my love to your mother and sister. Home, Stephen."

The first few steps up the hill were taken briskly enough, but then I felt that I was tired, and then that the sun was near down and I alone. But I reached home in safety, and spent all my indignation in quieting that of mamma and Kate.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

WORDSWORTH.

WE were very busy now, preparing for Mr. Howard's return and our own removal to Glen Luna. Every fine day we went down there and spent some time in putting things in order,—even linen was got out and beds made up, and wood laid in the fireplace. How pleasant it was to do all this! to think of being once more together and at home!

One not very pleasant surprise awaited us—we must do without Caddie. During her residence at the Moon, she had found an old-country-man to whom for some hidden cause she took a fancy; and they were to be married in November.

"He's not just unknownst to me neither," said Caddie, "for he's from the one place with meself, and little Pat Maloney that was sister's son to my brother-in-law (that's him that let in the sheriffs, ye mind) was this boy's cousin once removed,—so we felt acquainted like."

Affairs being in this state we concluded to try once more our old experiment of helping ourselves. "For a while," Mrs. Howard said, "till we could see a little how things

were going."

Meantime our kind friends on "Jack's bean" came down with us to do whatever they could think of, and would fain have given us at least a few days steady attendance; but failing to get our consent to this they finished all manner of odd jobs without asking leave. Wood was cut and brought, the cow driven home and milked; and before we had fairly laid off bonnets and shawls upstairs both fires were lit,

and the tea-kettle was getting up its steam as fast as possible. As it was by this time near dark, Elisha filled every attainable pail with fresh water, and then went home with his mother; while Mr. Barrington sat down in the kitchen to await the stage-hour.

In a happier mood than we had been in for months we stood round our little sitting-room fire. Never had the house looked so pleasant, so cheerful,—our eyes fairly revelled in the pretty things about us,—the very lettering of the books seemed to welcome us back; and Hebe and shells, the furniture, and even the well-bred colours of the carpet had many a glance of affection and greeting. Then the arranging of our own tea-tray and cups and saucers, the hunting out whatever there was in the house that was good to eat—it was all mere play. We had another instance of Mrs. Barrington's kindness in a nicely-packed basket that stood in the sitting-room when we came down stairs, and held the result of similar researches made by her in her own house. But it was useless to thank anybody,-Ezra only "guessed there wa'n't much in it that was good for anythin';"-in which however he was mistaken,-the bread alone saved us all baking trouble for several days.

Singularly enough (considering how we expected it) the stage was true to its time, and Mr. Howard's cold walk of three miles brought him home not very long after we had given him up. For a while we were too happy to say much—hearts and tongues were too unsteady and fluctuating to be trusted; but as the first excitement wore off we saw that my father looked pale and weary, and we began

to talk as fast as possible to cheer him up.

"How long have you travelled to-day papa?" said Kate.

"Since eight o'clock."

"How tired you must be! we will have tea directly. Would you like anything more substantial than toast and sweetmeats? What time did you have dinner?"

"I haven't had any dinner to-day," said my father.

"Haven't eaten anything since breakfast?"
"No—except three or four ginger-nuts."

"O you were very wrong!" said my stepmother,—"it is enough to make you sick."

"How could you do so papa?"

"Because I hadn't money enough to pay for a dinner-

that's the truth," said Mr. Howard.

It was all gone then!—pleasure and excitement and talkativeness,—but for the necessity of getting tea, I believe we should have sat still and looked at each other, forgetting all about it. As it was, Kate and I went off in quick time. "There is no telling where a blessing may light," as Ezra Barrington had once said, and truly his wife's basket was one that night,—failing that, our cupboard had been as bare as Mother Hubbard's of old; but now from its recesses a roast chicken walked into the room, and presented an imposing appearance upon the tea-table; and we had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Howard make up for his day's fast. Our own appetites were not worth talking about.

"What's the matter with you all?" said my father when he had sent his cup for a finishing draught of tea,—"you are looking mighty sober. I shall have some money by and by I hope."

There was a disagreeable little cloud scattered by these words: we had been questioning whether the summer's

expenses could have eaten up the summer's gains.

"You mean to stay at home now?" said my step-

mother.

"Indeed I do! that lecturing business is poor fun—in this way of managing it. And now that we have something to begin upon, I must try to find enough to do in this region."

"That agency papa?" said Kate.

"No my dear, that is otherwise disposed of. But I doubt not I can find other things that will pay as well."

"We might sell some of our superfluous furniture," said Mrs. Howard, "and that would keep us along till you get other business."

"There isn't an article of superfluous furniture in the house," said my father looking about him, "if by that you

mean what our comfort could dispense with."

"I didn't mean in these rooms—there are some things packed away,—those curtains, for instance."

"It's hardly worth while to sell them."-

"But if we ever wanted to put up such curtains," said

Mrs. Howard, "we should be rich enough to buy them. I would much rather have their value in money, at present."

"And so would I," said Kate.

"Well, I have no objection,—I daresay they could be sold. We'll see—I feel as if everything could be managed now that I am home once more, and find you all well."

We hoped that too, and yet we would fain have seen it. When Mr. Howard was talking in his usual sanguine way of plans and prospects, we often went along with him; but left to our own thoughts the foundation of both seemed misty. We could but fall back upon the assurance that it would all be arranged-wisely and for our good; -and then try to nerve ourselves against the seeming evil that might come with it. This effort sometimes concealed from us our own feelings in a measure; and we thought we had passed bravely over some little trial, till a sudden point of contrast told the full effect it had wrought. The coming on of winter with a larder and store-room as unfurnished as ours, and a purse to which supplies came so slowly in, was no trifle-Mr. Howard's dinnerless journey had given us a hint on the subject,—yet we thought we took it lightly.

A day or two after, Mrs. Willet came to see us and to congratulate us upon being at home and out of that farmhouse; which though it did very well was yet not just the

thing for us.

"Suppose you all come and dine with me to-morrow?" she said. "No—not to-morrow either—I am engaged—we have a little dance, and you don't like that—and I suppose Cary and Amelia couldn't give it up, but some day soon. Can't you? Would you rather come to dinner or to tea?"

"We are very busy people you know," said my step-

mother quietly.

"Well it would be a charity if you would come," said Mrs. Willet, "and help us eat up some of our provisions. Such a house full! I told Mr. Willet it really seemed wicked—we were living too luxuriously. First there came a man to the house with turkeys and I told him to leave three—they looked like nice ones,—and then Mr. Willet not knowing that I had bought these, sent home two more,

—one of them the largest I ever saw in my life—and three geese and a saddle of venison. And he says he has a stageload of stores on the way now. It's absurd—we shall be here so little while,—but he always gets things just so. Suppose you let me send you a turkey? will you?"

"No," said my stepmother smiling.

"You are such queer people! Well you see," said Mrs. Willet as she took leave, "you'll find enough to eat when you do come. I don't know what's to become of it all, for my part."

Kate and I followed her to the door, but when we came back Mrs. Howard sat with her hands over her face, shedding some more sorrowful tears than she often indulged in.

"Dear mamma what is the matter?"

"Nothing dear children except that I am very foolish—I believe I was not quite in the mood to bear heartless talk to-day—and it touched upon the wrong subject."

"We shall be taken care of," Kate said though her own eyes were overflowing,—"'They that fear the Lord shall

not want any good thing."

"They do not"—said Mrs. Howard putting her arms round us. "But it came over me bitterly for a moment—the do-nothing lives of some people, the toiling life of another—and so little to show for it. I am very wrong, very unthankful—all the best blessings are with your father,—both he and we can dispense with the others. My dear Kate! I am so very glad"—

"Glad of what, mamma?" I said.

She kissed my forehead once or twice before answer-

ing me.

"I have so many things to be glad of dear Gracie, that it would be hard to count them,—therefore like a true mortal I search out the few that are disagreeable. I am very glad that your sister can bear these reverses better than she once could. I wish you would take them as easily."

"O I do!" said I smiling. "You know mamma I may get tired sometimes, but I cannot feel sad if she and the rest of you do not. I daresay I am the brightest-looking of the present company, this minute—to judge by the feel-

ing of my face."

I might easily have been that and yet had nothing to boast of.

We began to live now upon the most strict do-without system. Once in a while my father had a day's help from Elisha Barrington,—the rest of the time he cut and brought the wood, milked the cow and gave the garden what attention it needed. Nevertheless the want of servants fell much more heavily upon us than upon him. The work Mr. Howard had to do, was good, wholesome exercise in the open air-not more than his health required; and the chars once done, the rest of the day and night was his own. His meals too were better cooked than when we had Caddie, his bed sloped with a nicer grading,—his linen might have been the envy of the neighbourhood; and the weariness of hand that sometimes accomplished the one and the other, was quite beyond a strong man's imagination. The endless routine of meals and dishes, sweeping, dusting, bread and bed making,—the toil of mind to contrive and arrange it all.—the want of a pail of water when the clothes were to sprinkle, of good wood when they were to iron, of kindling when the fire went out,-the cold rooms and mornings when and where we came down to get breakfast-it took women to understand or to get through it. But the spirit-machine, whether mental or physical, works not so briskly when it works in a circle. Sometimes we grew very tired and could almost have stopped short in our treadmill, and taken the consequences, -sometimes we half resolved to enlighten Mr. Howard upon the state of things, and to have a servant at all risks. Never before had we been quite alone, for now we had not even a boy about the place; but with these half-determinations came the difficulty of getting dollars, even in the singular; and instead of stopping our work we pushed on the harder, that we might have more time for copying music maps and law-papers. When the light served for none of these, we took a turn at mending and making,-this last department was but small. I used sometimes to wish that a little of the relief prayed for in the law-papers could have fallen to the lot of my aching wrist and weary eyes; but though the money was paid us pretty punctually, and that for the lectures came in by degrees, it was kept most charily for any unforeseen time of

need that might suddenly come, or until more steady and profitable business could be had. "The destruction of the poor is their poverty"—we appreciated that proverb to the full. With a clear knowledge of the profitableness of wholesale dealings, we could practise but small retail; and while for a few seven or four-pound papers of sugar we paid the price of a barrel, we had not half the comfort of it. "It is pleasant to take from a great heap"—another most true saying, which poor people use in the pontail. Furthermore it became very difficult to get anything done, —a light of glass in the window, a shed for the cow, a moulding-board for the kitchen, were left unattended to because the carpenter thought it not worth his while to oblige us; and other matters in the same way.

For ourselves, we wanted a good many things, but in our department as in my father's management had to supply the want of means. Dresses which had been given up in the spring as past wearing, were now pulled out and overhauled, and made to do further service; but the circle round which both ends must meet was a very small one! it

held us rather uncomfortably close.

I still wanted to keep locked doors, but as Mrs. Howard truly said, "that could not last always; and if anybody was to get in, it might as well be done at once." Still we

knew of no danger in that way.

"It's a comfort to find that you can laugh yet!—putting nerves out of the question," said Mr. Howard as he came from his study into the dining-room. "What in the world has been the matter? Is dinner ready?"

We nodded assent but did not speak.

"Well pray let us have it then. I don't see much signs of it here," he said, seating himself at the table.

"There isn't much reality of it anywhere," said Kate.
"Something smells very good," said my father, "but as we are not in fairyland I should like to have more senses than one gratified."

"You must dine upon laughing, papa," said I,—"Mamma meant to have cooked dinner, but she was interrupted and

couldn't go on."

"Hush Grace!" said Mrs. Howard, "give your father what there is, and no more about it."

"The misfortune was," said I, "that our marketing did not come till it was too late to get 'the usual trimmings'; so there's only potatoes and this."

And I set a little covered basket on the table before

him.

"I'm afraid we shall find wicker-work indigestible," said Mr. Howard swinging back the cover. "What's here? napkins?"

"Take it out, Gracie," said Mrs. Howard, "or we shall have a breakage of something. That basket-lid just missed the castors."

I removed the basket and napkins and set on the table one dish covered with another. My father took off the

top one.

"Heyday! where in the world did you get ducks?"

"We didn't papa!" said Kate—"there's only one!" And the laugh that went round might have astonished

anybody.

"Hardly that,"—said Mr. Howard sticking the fork into the tiny specimen of the broad-bills which lay on its back before him. "But my dear you had better let me buy the next—the smallest are not apt to be the best. What is the mystery about this duck ?" he said looking at us as we exchanged glances.

"That duck was a present," said my stepmother.

"Indeed!-I didn't know we had such good friends left. And this is the laughing-stock I suppose?"

"I have been almost too angry to laugh," said Kate. "No," said I, "you laughed too much to be angry.

Where do you think it came from papa?"

"From some one who thought our misfortunes had taken away our appetites, I should judge," said my father. this some more of Mr. Carvill's handiwork?"-

"Mr. Carvill!" said Kate, "no indeed! his ducks were

beauties."

"And this is not a wild one, either. Well who brought

"It was brought," said Kate, with a little indignant colour coming into her cheeks, "by Mrs. Willet's footman in full livery—and he handed the basket in with as much daintiness as if it had been sugar-plums. I wanted to send

it right back, and mamma wouldn't. Just think of send-

ing us one duck-ready cooked!"

"Saved you some trouble, that last item my dear," said Mr. Howard coolly helping himself to another bone. "Mrs. Willet, hey?"

"But papa—wouldn't you have sent it back?"

"Why no—" said my father,—"I shouldn't have wished to hire a messenger, and still less to carry it myself."

"Did you ever hear of anything so pitiful?"

"It is a little on that order," said Mr. Howard, surveying the wreck,—"I am not much in the habit of compassionating roast ducks—but this one does make very little show in the world. My dear Kate!" he said laughing, "doesn't your pride lie beyond Mrs. Willet's reach? I assure you mine does."

"I never want to have anything more to do with her."

"I do—as much as I ever did."

"But this is almost an insult papa."

"Not meant so, Katie. And if it were—

"An honest, sensible, and well-bred man Will not affront me—and no other can."

If Mrs. Willet chooses to send us a roast grasshopper, I shall take it thankfully—and make as hearty a meal as the circumstances will permit."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Yet reason saith, reason should have ability
To hold these worldly things in such proportion,
As let them come or go with even facility.

Sidney.

ONE afternoon late in October, when it was already drawing towards dusk, Mr. Howard had gone into the woods to chop and mamma and Kate were disposing of the dinner dishes and talking to me as I sat on a bench by the fire. I heard some one knock at the back door, and going to open it I found two men who inquired for my father.

Not particularly pleased with their appearance I promised to call him, and then closed the door; and going round to another entrance I set off for the woods, followed by Kate. The sound of the axe guided us, and after a little calling and seeking we found Mr. Howard and asked him to come home. I reached the house first, and saw with no pleasant surprise that the two men had ushered themselves in, and were now sitting composedly in the kitchen. I asked Mrs. Howard if she had opened the door-no, they had done it for themselves. I flitted about, much strengthened in my forebodings, and was both glad and sorry to see Mr. Howard come in,-I thought he had received our message gravely. In some moods the mind is singularly alive to trifles, and the sight of my father as he entered the piazza, in his shirtsleeves and bearing the axe with which he had been working, affected me very differently from what it would had he been dressed with his old fastidious elegance. I looked at the cloth coat and shining beaver of the one intruder, the fur cap and boots of the other,-I knew they had not come for good!

For a while I heard nothing distinctly but earnest talk-

ing,—my impatience would not bear delay, and I found an errand to the kitchen closet. At the door I distinguished these words spoken by the best dressed and most disagreeable of the two men.

"I won't say but I have the right to take 'em all to-

night."

"I suppose you will leave us beds to sleep on?" remarked

Mr. Howard with a momentary stir of indignation.

"I don't say that I won't—but I don't say that I will,—I won't say that I haven't a right to take everything away

to-night."

One thought as to the possibility of resting my weariness upon the floor, and I entered the kitchen. Mr. Howard stood leaning against the dresser, looking gravely and sadly down at the rag-carpet, while close to each other sat the two men, the one quiet, the other displaying his sense of power. I felt my face burning with some strange fever, and catching up something out of the closet I returned to the tea-room.

"What is it?" said Mrs. Howard.

"I don't know mamma."

"Do not go in there Gracie," said Kate, "it will only trouble you. Papa will tell us all about it."

"O I had rather go-not into the kitchen, I'm just going

to the door."

"I don't know what to say to this," I heard my father say sadly,—"it comes upon me quite by surprise. I had supposed everything was arranged."

"Ay but you see there was this mistake. No notice was

given and so of course Mr. McLoon takes his rights."

"His rights!" said my father indignantly. "Well—it don't signify—he has the power at any rate, which answers as well,—I suppose the law will protect him as it has done many another oppressor. I have nothing to say to this business,—you probably know what you are about, and must proceed as you think proper. We have a Sovereign protector in the midst of all man can do!"

"It's so late to-night," said the man after a whisper from his companion, "that I don't think it will be worth while to move anything till morning. You may be sure we know what we are about sir—certainly! There is no

mistake on our part though unfortunately there was on yours. We'll just look round to see that everything is in

its place."

My father led the way in silence, giving me once a very sad reflection of my smile as he caught my eye, and the men looked slightly at the rooms, referring occasionally to their list.

"That's all to-night, I be-lieve," said Mr. Pratt, "except we must take something to make our levy good. Let me see—the—have you not a small picture by Holbein?"

"Yes," said my father.

"Will you please to point it out?"

"This is it," said Mr. Howard laying his hand upon the frame.

"You will take it," said Mr. Pratt nodding to the sheriff.

Until then I had given no outward recognition of their business except a flushed cheek; but when I saw our favourite Holbein taken down and in the sheriff's hands, and that pretty, stately, court beauty fairly moving to the door, the tears started into my eyes and I was glad to move off too.

"Good evening sir," said Mr. Pratt,—"to-morrow we

will come and look over things more carefully."

The door closed behind them, and another one admitted Mrs. Howard and Kate.

"What is all this about?"

"O it's McLoon again," said my father throwing himself down upon the sofa.

"McLoon," said Mrs. Howard,—"I thought he was dis-

posed of long ago."

"So did I—and he was, or would have been if people were faithful to their business. It's all owing to Phibbs's carelessness.—The matter was arranged before I went away in the spring,—but when I was not here to write to him and keep him to his duty, he neglected it—didn't serve a notice or something, I don't know what,—and then these fellows seize their advantage and rush down upon me for what they know they have no right to."

"And can nothing be done?"

"No, I fear not," said my father sighing; they are not

obliged to overlook neglect in my lawyer, and they are too sharp and hard business men to do anything for charity."

"They, papa?" said Kate.

"They.—I don't know whether McWherter has any interest in the affair beyond the desire of helping his brother-in-law, but they work together."

"But surely," said Mrs. Howard, "they must leave us

things enough to use?"

"I don't know, indeed—if they must they will, but not else. It is a little hard to see all these things that I have collected and been so fond of, scattered to the winds, (I'd as lief they were, as sold to pay that debt)—but I could bear it well enough if I were alone in the world. I didn't know that I should ever live to see my dear ones turned out of house and home!"

"'The Lord reigneth,' yet," said my stepmother softly,

though her voice trembled a little.

We sat looking into the bright fire that had seen so many things written on our faces; the silence unbroken except by a half-checked sigh, or by the wind which came fitfully tossing and drifting away the leaves which had once fluttered in June freshness. Even so!—we thought the trees were pretty bare before, but this night had pointed out the small remnant that to-morrow would shake off. My father spoke first, and it was to repeat my stepmother's words.

"'The Lord reigneth! let the earth rejoice!'—But oh, human nature is a hard thing to struggle with! There may be, there is, a wise purpose in all this; and yet sense seizes upon the present, and faith looks forward very faintly."

"But the house is left us yet, papa," said Kate—"and home lies not in tables and chairs. Dear papa! you ought to be very glad you are not alone,—it will be strange if we can do nothing but increase your trials. And you must not look so sad—see here is Grace with a face as anxious as if the whole world rested on her little shoulders." And she put her arm round me as if to ward off at least part of the burden.

"We shall not mind anything if you do not, papa," I

said.

He looked at us with more loving sorrow in his face

than his words had told of; and Mrs. Howard's eyes took sadly the same direction. And what was I thinking of?—even of the blessed change that time and civilization had wrought,—a man's wife and children could no longer be

sold to pay his debt!

Then Kate and I went to get another of those careful teas—not this time of welcome but of comfort. Affection that cannot reach great things spends itself upon the small, and if as some think, everything has a character, then was the tea-table that night not unmeaning. Never was table set with more exactness, never was more attention paid to its contents,—we tried to get together whatever the house had that was nice and appetizing. Little that would have been but for a woman's power of conjuration, and it was labour lost after all,—the will to eat was beyond our reach. I should not say it was labour lost so far as we were concerned—we were more than paid by Mr. Howard's look when we pressed him to take one thing and another,—but it was not an enlivening intercourse on either side.

"Papa," said Kate when we had been musingly gazing at our empty tea cups, "hadn't Grace and I better take out everything of our own to-night?"

"Everything of your own?"

"I mean all our books and shells—you know some of them belong to us. Mr. McLoon cannot touch those, can he?"

"Of course not,—therefore it don't much matter about

moving them to-night."

"But won't it save trouble and mistakes?"

"Perhaps so."-

The table cleared away, we began our work; taking the precaution to close the shutters, and where there were none to hang a quilt before the window. For aught we knew Mr. McLoon might have watchers round the house, and if they saw us touch anything, there was no telling what desperate measures they might attempt,—we had all the old disagreeable feeling of the unseen enemy. But now the enemy had really got in,—we felt almost bewildered. How strange it all looked! the closed windows, the piles of selected books, the empty spaces they had left;—and our own figures in that dusky candle-light—were we our

selves or were we somebody else? My father came in and stood looking at us.

"You are giving yourselves needless trouble my dear children—your little possessions cannot possibly be taken."

"Might not there be some mistake?" we repeated.

"I will see that there is none."

"Then you think it would be better to leave them just

where they are, papa?"

"I am inclined to think so. These people probably judge me by themselves—it may save trouble to take your books out before their eyes."

"But they haven't a right to one of the others!" said

Kate, looking down from the book-steps.

"No dear, not in conscience—no just man would do as they are doing; but the laws cannot fit in to every variety of circumstance, and in this case they protect most flagrant injustice. I must submit to them, nevertheless."

"Well"—said Kate,—"hand me up those books again Gracie. It's a pity the laws should ever be made to do

what they don't mean to!"

We went back into the sitting-room, and gathering round the fire talked long and earnestly of what we might do,—how we could replace certain wants,—how it would not cost much to get a half dozen plain chairs, and how a cloth would hide any sort of a table. We could not particularize much, for as yet all was indistinct: we knew not what things Mr. McLoon claimed; and had only a general idea that all was to go, and that we and the house were to begin life again together.

"I can't understand anything about it!" said Mrs. Howard. "These men made no levy—where did they get their

list?

"I'll tell you," said my father. "You know in that Self and Mulhawl business, when I got sureties I gave them security in a mortgage on the property in question; and that mortgage was filed at the Clerk's office. There's where McLoon got his list,—he must have asked to see the mortgage and then have copied from it."

"And does he claim nothing else?"

"Nothing but what is on his list, if I understand right."
"That is some comfort then," said Mrs. Howard, "for

the mortgage did not mention everything in the house.

At least the appraiser's list did not."

"Everything of much value,"—and my father glanced towards the open door in the direction of his favourite shells and minerals. "Well, let them go,—I lived without them once, and I can again."

"But I am sure everything was not put down-there was

one set of chairs up in the garret."-

"What is one set of chairs!"-

"They show for something when they stand alone," said my stepmother with a smile that was ordered to report a bright side to the question. "Wait till we have had a few days to arrange things, and you'll see how nice the house will look. There was a lamp too, I think, and there is some old furniture in the lumber-room. It will be a real pleasure to exert all our powers of contrivance and ingenuity,—they surely will not fail us now—for the first time."

"And where will contrivance and ingenuity find material

to work upon?"

"O never mind asking questions papa," said Kate.

"Anxiety is the best purveyor that can be, and if the material comes, it don't matter where from."

"There are some things that will never fail me, I am sure," said Mr. Howard. "Gracie dear, will you bring me

my inkstand? I have a letter to write."

He went to his calculations with pen and paper, but we continued ours verbally, and soon talked ourselves out of the sorrowful state into one of headache and excitement; while now and then a most unmirthful laugh told of the overwrought feeling that was too fevered for tears. One thing alone brought them that night,—it was my father's prayer for the people whom God had permitted to injure us.

We went to bed feeling very quiet and strange, and wondering if we should sleep on the floor to-morrow night! could such a thing ever be? But the body had been touched with the mind's excitement, and rest was much sooner wanted than won.

CHAPTER XL.

See the morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress smiling.
Milton.

TEAVEN and earth were one bright glow of beauty and II promise. The many-coloured tufts that yet decked the woodland, the lake in its luxuriance of quiet, the fair sky, and the scattered clouds that caught and telegraphed the tidings of sunrise, -how little akin they were to our feelings! But we had got up very early—when earth was as shadowy as our own hearts,—and having lighted candles and fires, we had busied ourselves in preparing breakfast while yet we had a quiet room in which to eat it. That was a sad awaking; but as the day advanced, and the sun poured his full light in at the windows, everything shone with the very spirit of home,—we almost thought we had been dreaming. Could it all be? and it was only that nameless weight about the heart that answered ves. But the peaceful look of the unconscious furniture half gainsaid it.

We sat quietly expecting Mr. Pratt. He did not appear until summoned by the clock-fairy with those ten taps of her wand which had more than once called in discomfort. Poor little fairy! she was not to announce anything to us

much longer.

Sleep had been a composing draught to Mr. Pratt,—the rough edges were a little planed off since last night, and his mind in a more comfortable state;—it might be because, unlike the magician, he found the palace in its usual place—not spirited away by its rightful owners. So he seated himself, and made affable remarks about the weather;

while the sheriff who was a grave and on the whole not

disagreeable-looking man, kept perfect silence.

"Well sir!" said Mr. Pratt at length, and as if he rather thought my father should have introduced the subject,—
"if you please we will proceed with this business. It's disagreeable of course, but it must be got through with. Now I'll read over this list, and you'll just point out the articles as they occur. It's only to see that they are here, you know,—I've no doubt we shall find everything in its place—no doubt at all! This is what is called the sitting-room, ain't it?—'sitting-room, first floor.' We may as well begin here and go regularly on."

"Are you at liberty to strip the house?" said Mr. How-

ard,—"does the law allow people nothing?"

"I claim nothing but what is on my list, sir," said Mr. Pratt—"the law allows necessaries I believe, but not those articles which are merely delightful,—if there is anything on my list which is absolutely requisite for the family use, I suppose we'll have to leave it. Now Mr. Flagg, just take notice of the articles as I name them off."

"That stand was bought since the list was made," said

my father.

"And that hearth-rug," said I.

"I claim nothing but what is on my list," said Mr. Pratt turning from one to the other—"nothing at all,—everything else is left of course. 'One large vase'—that is it Mr. Flagg—'one work-stand,' one lady's cabinet-desk.'"

"Those belong to mamma and me," said Kate.

"Makes no difference Miss Howard—I suppose Mr. Howard bought them."

"Are gifts not excepted?"

"Why—in some cases—small things that can be easily moved,—but articles of furniture—I should think not."

"But these are articles of daily use and comfort I am

sure," said my father.

"I suppose that might be said of everything else—" said Mr. Pratt rather snappishly. "I can't leave everything, sir—and of course I must take some things that you would like to keep."

"Proceed—" said Mr. Howard.

"You see, sir," said Mr. Pratt deprecatingly, a little

taken aback by my father's manner, "I am only running over my list now, just to find out that all is as it should be —we'll consider afterwards what is to be left. It is a very unpleasant duty for me, of course."

And finishing that room they went into the next.

"You had better let me go round too, papa," Kate whispered; "I don't believe you know which the things are."

So she and I followed with Mr. Howard the motions of

the list-holder.

"'Drawing-room first floor'"—read off Mr. Pratt.—
"This is it I suppose. '20 black-walnut and satin-wood chairs'—are these the walnut?"—making the circuit of the room with his pencil.

"We were cleaning house when that list was made," explained Kate, "and the chairs stood all together in here.

The satin-wood chairs are in the next room."

"Ah—yes—then I may say all right. Now, 'one ebony cabinet shells'—is that the article?"

"Yes," said my father with a half sigh.

"Very fine—upon my word"—said Mr. Pratt walking up to the case. "You must have had great pleasure in collecting these Mr. Howard. Fine drawer of harps—remarkably fine specimen of Wentletrap! I ought to know too, for I saw a great many when I was abroad—and have a number myself, in fact."

"Do you remember ever to have seen a specimen of Scalaria pretiosa?" said my father, whose patience was

giving way.

"No sir"—said Mr. Pratt—"that is a shell I do not recollect to have met with,—it's a little strange too—I examined so many of the foreign collections. 'One print of "the watering-place"—framed.' Ah! very fine! I saw a great many of the masterpieces of Wouvermen when I was abroad, but none that I liked so well as that. Everything seems in its place—turns up at the word—" said Mr. Pratt with a pleasant smile. "'One Hebe'—there she stands.—You must be very careful in moving that, Mr. Flagg."

The sheriff nodded, and touched Hebe's fingers to see

what they were made of.

"Now 'the study'.—I can't go over all these books—I suppose they are just as they were?"

"They are the same books," said Mr. Howard,—"whether they are arranged just as they were two years ago I can't say. Some of them belong to my children, and of course must be taken out."

"Of course sir. Those you see are clearly gifts of possession, while that desk for example was but a gift for use. But any presents—or articles of virtu—anything of that sort of course is sacred," said Mr. Pratt with a wave of his hand. "You understand Miss Howard," he added turning to Kate, "whatever belongs to yourself or your sister I leave, of course."

"You have no right to do anything else," was on my tongue, for his manner was provokingly benevolent and considerate. But I kept silence, thinking it best to let him be good-natured if he had a mind; and nothing makes people

forbearing like the belief that they are so.

"I have no doubt this will all be settled in a short time," said Mr. Pratt—"no doubt at all. It will be a very easy matter to arrange, and you will have the property all back in a few weeks."

"I am very sure I shall not," said Mr. Howard resolutely,—"I am obliged to submit to this piece of injustice, but I never shall try to pay off an unrighteous debt."

"'Contents of kitchen pantry'—" proceeded Mr. Pratt.

Such had been the careless designation given in the list to a closet which contained very little pertaining to the kitchen, but many things of much value to us, and which we could hardly have replaced. Here was stowed away the china which had been so carefully washed in the spring;—lamps, glass, the old wine which was kept against sickness, and a thousand and one useful etceteras. It was with some trepidation that I now opened the door,—but "men are but men!"

Mr. Pratt looked in—his eye bringing back about as discriminating a report as might have been expected. I don't believe he saw a thing besides a lantern, a brown paper-bag, and two pans.

"Leave that, certainly," he said dashing his pencil through "one kitchen pantry." "Now comes 'front bed-

room on the west'."

We went upstairs; and sending the sheriff into the rooms, Mr. Pratt crouched in uncomfortable positions in the hall and called over the roll, while Mr. Flagg responded for tables, chairs and bedsteads. "Here"—"yes"—"all right"—"go ahead"—were sent forth in quick succession, while I should have liked to call out, "all wrong!" and "stop!" Anybody might have cried shame! that heard every bed and bureau in the house read off, with such little varieties as,

"1 bedroom easy-chair"—
"1 inlaid dressing-case"—

"Yours Mr. Howard?" said Mr. Pratt looking up. "Yes"

The receiver paused, twirled his pencil, and then with a

little shake of his head went on to the next article.

But he was somewhat mollified—or ashamed, and now and then checked off a thing to be left of his own accord, after he had (in compliance with the statute) ordered the sheriff to leave the family beds and bedding.

"You may leave that bed too, Mr. Flagg—you might like to have a friend with you sir. And that stand—ah well, I guess that may stay—you'll find it convenient."

The bureaus went rather hard—they were so large and

handsome, and so invariably full.

"Is that one in daily use?" he said at length, pointing to an old-fashioned wardrobe.

"Yes," I replied, "my sister's clothes are in it."

"Well—I don't see but we'll have to leave all the bureaus. You understand Mr. Flagg—whatever I have checked off, you will leave."

When the rooms had been all gone over we went down

stairs again to consider of unlocated things.

"Now Miss Howard," said Mr. Pratt—"the silver if you please—that stands next."

Kate and I brought it.

"Ah—very bright! 'One tea set'—this is it, is it?—'2 doz. large spoons—4 doz. small ditto—2 doz. dessert'—no, '22 dessert'—(just run them over, Mr. Flagg)—"

"All right," said the sheriff.

"Upon my word Mr. Howard, you have been remarkably fortunate with your plate—seems to turn up all right

—I wish mine could be kept so," said Mr. Pratt politely, "but it's always getting lost."

"I wonder if you have any!" thought I.

"I wish you better success in keeping yours than I have met with, sir," said my father.

Mr. Pratt returned to his list.

"8 salt spoons—2 fish knives—2 ice-cream do.—2 soup ladles—6 vegetable dishes and covers—1 doz. egg-cups"—

He looked up in some surprise, and the sheriff handled and weighed them admiringly. I looked too, and thought of the breakfasts where I had seen those cups—the hands I had seen use them !—I did not hear the next page of the list.

"All right sir," said Mr. Pratt—"it really gives me great satisfaction to find things so straight. Now—'greenhouse plants'."—

"Part of them are dead, and the rest are in the ground,"

said Kate—"There may be half a dozen."

"They are of my daughters' own collecting," said Mr. Howard.

Mr. Pratt checked them off.

"Left, of course. 'Ice in ice-house'—used up by this time I guess," said he with an agreeable laugh. "'Farming utensils—wagons, &c.'"—

"You will find those at the barn," said my father.

"'Two cows—4 3-year olds—1 yearling'—I suppose they'll be all forthcoming?"

"No—the yearling is dead, and one of the cows."

"Ah—not actionable—of course. That is all.—I am extremely glad things have turned out so pleasantly,—somehow I was under a different impression."

"I daresay!" said my father somewhat indignantly, "Mr. McLoon could hardly have hoped to succeed so well in his

injustice!"

And launching forth upon the broad sea between the shores of right and wrong, my father clearly shewed that Mr. McLoon's sailing chart was rather peculiar and dangerous. Mr. Pratt sat with his hands on his knees, his eyes on the floor, nodding his head patiently, and now and then putting in a word.

"Ah!—of course!—very disagreeable indeed—wish I

hadn't been chosen for the office—can't imagine why I was, except that I always was a crony of Bob's—suppose that must have been the reason.—Well sir—my time is precious,—I should like to look over the list again, and see if there is any article you would like to have left till the affair is settled,—for I'm confident it will be settled—and of course you would pledge yourself that they should be forthcoming if called for. Let me see—this work-stand you say belongs to Mrs. Howard?"

"Yes," said Kate.

"Well"—he said checking it off—"I guess it'll have to stay for the present."

"May as well leave this carpet too," said the sheriff.

"O yes—till the affair is settled. The desk is too valuable to be left. Now about this silver—I suppose you'd like to keep some of it for the present?"

"It's not very pleasant to eat with iron spoons," said I

quietly. Kate had left the room.

"No-of course,-just lay out what you want, Miss

Howard."

I went to the table, and stood there to make the division, feeling that the flush on my cheek was deepening and that I was getting excited. The sheriff looked at me curiously from time to time, as if to see or to wonder how I could bear it all.

I laid aside four large and four small spoons.

"No, I will take only two of the large," I said, "the small ones will be the most useful."

"You needn't put the others back," said Mr. Pratt-

"how many small spoons do you want?"

"When we have fruit we need extra ones—I should like nine."

"Well take them then,—a sugar-tongs I suppose you can do without. Have you any forks in the house but these?"

"I believe there are some steel ones put away some-

where—these are what we always use."

"Well—you must take some;—you know I'd as leave you had them all as not, only I must do my duty as receiver. No, I guess you needn't take those," he said, as after laying out four breakfast-forks my hand touched the

pile of large ones. "There-I'll give you two more of the small, and that'll be more convenient, for you might have a friend come to see you. Won't that do?"

"Yes," I said, wondering at the friend and him together.

"Haven't you any teapot but this?"

"One without a lid," I said, feeling a strong desire to

laugh.

"This 'll have to stay then," said Mr. Pratt with a half "The fish-knives I guess we won't leave-not things of general use,—why I don't think fish comes on my table above once a year, sir."

"I wonder what your table has to do with ours!"

thought I.

"All the rest must go—don't you want salt-spoons?"
"We should like one," said I, the corners of my mouth twitching again,-"it doesn't matter-we can use a tea-

spoon."

"No, take two," said Mr. Pratt as if he felt a little ashamed of his business. "And now if you have a basket or so I should like to take these things with me: I'll send the baskets back again. Is that large table in the diningroom in constant use?"

"Yes," I said.

"I'll check that off then—this may as well go. Would you like that engraving stand?"

"No-I would rather keep something else. Wouldn't

you, papa?"

Mr. Howard assented by a slight motion of the head. "This desk in the study—you say it is yours, Mr. Howard ?"

"The one I am in the habit of using daily. But I can

do without it-" he added after a moment.

Apparently the receiver thought Mr. McLoon could not, for he shook his head and went on.

"The book-rack goes of course—and the harp."—

"It is rather a strange proceeding," said my father who felt this last item as I did, "it is rather a strange proceeding for a man to make war upon ladies' property!"

"Very sorry—of course sir.—Cosuse in drawing-room that goes, -ditto in sitting-room. - Well-I guess we must call that a mere elegancy"—said Mr. Pratt after a prolonged look at it. "Minerals—shells—I believe we need go no further,—all the rest are clearly luxuries. Would you like to have these four chairs in the north bedroom left, Miss Howard?"

"We can do without them," I answered.

"Mr. Pratt," said Kate coming into the room, "it would be a great convenience to us to keep our dictionaries at

least till this business is finally settled."

"Certainly! Miss Howard—by all means! keep them for good—I shouldn't think of touching them—I wish I could leave everything, I'm sure. It has been a very painful business to me, indeed."

She stood listening to him with a little of her old look of superiority, and some very slight contempt for the pain that was so readily undertaken. Before a stranger could

have seen either, they were gone.

"Do I understand you sir, that we may keep these dic-

tionaries in any event?"

"Certainly—in any event," said Mr. Pratt, who had probably never heard of any dictionaries but Walker and Webster,—if he had known the number of ours his "cer-

tainly" would perhaps have been more dubious.

"If there are any other volumes you would like to keep for the present," said Mr. Pratt in an excess of good nature, "just take them out and give the sheriff a list of them. Only don't take too many."

"How many?" said Kate.

"O—ten or twenty volumes—I leave it to you. Don't get me into a scrape with McLoon—that's all!"

"I heard you mention those two large chairs," said Mr.

Howard.

"In the drawing-room?—yes, 'two blue easy-chairs,'—" said Mr. Pratt, referring to his list.

"They are not mine nor bought with my money."

"That should have been mentioned before," said the receiver, looking a little disturbed. "Not yours, you say?

Whose are they?"

"No—they were left to my children by a distant relative. You particularly desired, sir, if you recollect, that such information should be kept till the list had been gone over."

"I don't know what to do about it," said Mr. Pratt.-"Mr. McLoon I am sure, at least I know"-

"I know what I shall do if you take them," said my

father.

"Well"—said Mr. Pratt—"I don't know—if McLoon don't like it, I shall have to take the consequences,-however I will check them off. Now that basket, if you please."

I brought the baskets, and Kate and I packed up the silver, wondering to ourselves if we should ever see it again. and thinking curiously of the times that were gone.

"If you have no objection sir," said Mr. Pratt, "I should

like to put a man in the house here to-night."

"I have a very strong objection—it is a thing I cannot consent to."

"It ain't needful," put in the sheriff looking at the receiver,—"I'll risk it."

Mr. Pratt demurred, and I was again near laughing. The idea that we should have so little sense or honour as to try to make away with what the law had fairly seized upon!

"Well,"—said Mr. Pratt again, "I believe we shall have to waive that. You give me your word sir that you will let nothing be touched ?--just as a favour sir-do you?"

"Certainly," said my father.

"Very good sir, I take your word and the sheriff must depend upon mine. I will venture it. You give me your word as a man of honour, and Mr. Flagg will take mine. It's probable we may send for these things this afternoon, but perhaps not till to-morrow. Mr. Flagg, you will have the goodness to see to the removing them, yourself. Have you the time Mr. Howard?—thank you, I can reach the stage then. Good afternoon sir," and they departed.

CHAPTER XLI.

Bailiff Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold. I love humanity. People may say that we in our way have no humanity; but I'll shew you my humanity this moment.—Good-Natured Man.

THE rest of the afternoon was left to us in peace and quietness; that is, in a way: we had no more intruders, and the taking off seemed to be postponed, but still body and mind found enough to do and not of the pleasantest. Our own books and shells must be collected and carried upstairs, with every article of furniture that was not on Mr. Pratt's list; while those things that he claimed were as much as possible brought together and into one part of the house, that the other rooms might not be overrun. And in the confiscated furniture all drawers and compartments must be emptied.

It was rather hard work. Our blank books and papers had a natural affinity for the desk, and to take Mr. Howard's out of his and then to bestow them in a pile upstairs, roused more than sorrow. It was but a few months since his desk had been put in order by our own hands; the outside varnished, the inside cleaned and decorated with new ribbons and cloth. And all for Mr. McLoon's benefit! Our shells too were generally connecting links among my father's specimens. We stood long before the ebony cabinet,-taking up shell after shell, and giving each a careful examination,-looking once more at the well-known beauties and peculiarities of Volutes and Argonauts and Stellcridians, of the fine Carinaria Vitrea that my father had been so proud of; -how well we recollected the time when it was bought! They were all old friends—we seemed to have some special association with every one.

"Do you remember," said Kate as she stood holding in

her hand Mr. Howard's favourite Scalaria, "do you re-

member Gracie when papa brought this home?"

"And you had been sick, and he said you should have the first sight of it—O yes, I remember—how could I forget? You know he had been so fearful of not getting it the man took so long to make up his mind,—and then papa was so pleased when he had it fairly in the house."

"What happy children we were then!" said Kate.

"How Stephanie used to vex papa by calling this his 'trap-shell'!"

"She would be sorry for us if she knew all."

"It's better that she don't," said Kate—"she has enough to be sorry for I dare say, or will have. O I wish we could keep these stone lilies!"

"Have you taken out our harps yet, Katie?"

"No—my harp 'par excellence' as that man said, must go. But these poor little harps—"and she pulled out the drawer.

"I wonder what Mr. McLoon is made of!" said I.

"Hard to tell, Gracie. But I wouldn't change places with him to-night,—we are a great deal happier than he is."

"O how much.—And yet one does love the inanimate

things one has grown up among."-

"One look at you has almost reconciled me to parting with them," said Kate smiling. "If you were an Ark or an Apple snail, Gracie, I should show fight for it. Come dear, it's no use to look at them any longer,—let us go and get tea. I believe I have taken out all of ours—O no—here is Stephanie's old friend, 'King Midas.'"

"And this Olive.—That's all, I am sure."

My father kept himself perfectly quiet during all this; looked at nothing, and except now and then a sigh or an expression of patience or impatience, he sat silently reading—or seeming to read,—the pages not turned over very fast.

And we had tea for the last time at our little table.—

I was fairly tired, hand and heart, and perhaps for that reason feeling for to-morrow's work; but it was a fatigue that courted restlessness, not rest. I found myself inclined to have a leave-taking of the furniture,—to seat myself in the chairs, to look into our old cabinet-desk, to open different books. Once I lay down on the drawing-room sofa, but

I grew sad there; and then tried to lose myself in Waverly—in its scenes of imaginary comfort and discomfort. It did not rest me. The tears and interest that one can give to such fiction must come from a mind at ease,—the spring of a sorrowing heart lies away from its reach; and the pages I looked at were interlined with our own history.

The morning came,—foggy, threatening, sending down a few drops now and then to show its intentions, as Mr. Pratt took away our Holbein to show his. So doubtful indeed was the weather, that neither sheriff nor assistants appeared before mid-day, and I half began to hope that our eyes might have some short reprieve from bare walls. Meantime Kate and I sat quietly at our copying, having made the last necessary arrangements and persuaded Mrs. Howard to keep herself out of the way of all trouble and confusion.

But the sun came out, and the sheriff came in; and with him a man into whose charge he was to give the furniture, and an array of other men to move it. Among them were several who had formerly worked for us-it looked strange to see familiar faces about such unfamiliar work; and wagons of all sorts were clustered as near the house as the grounds would allow. There were so many hands indeed, that the work proceeded rapidly. My father with a sort of tender regard for his old possessions, gave many a hint as to how they should be moved or packed, and now and then we were called upon to find some missing article, or give up some key. On one of these occasions I reached the drawing-room just in time to take a last look at our Hebe. The little figure was moved out of its place, and stood in the full light from the windows with one or two straggling sunbeams striking across it. I had hardly ever seen it so pretty, and summoning Kate from her work we stood and looked at it together. Looked and thought. We remembered that Hebe almost as long ago as thought went back-my father had brought her from Italy when we were little children; and into how many a conversation had she been wrought—how many a gathering of loved faces had we seen near her. And now we were to part company. Yet there she stood with the same graceful attitude, the same sweet brightness of face, the same joyousness-so

like what we had been, so unlike what we were now! Kate went away with full eyes.

We were writing at the large dining-table which was

left us, when my father came in.

"I can't make out which of these upstairs things are to

go"—he said.

"She knows," said the second receiver peering round Mr. Howard's shoulder, and indicating me by a motion of his head—which was "sorely unkempt."—"She knows—Why couldn't she come and tell about 'em?"

"It is a good deal of trouble for ladies to take," said my

father rather sternly.

"O I don't mind the trouble papa—pray let us have no

mistakes made."

Upstairs I went, through quite an avenue of "unkempt" heads and extraordinary hats; followed by my father, the sheriff, the receiver, and several helpers. These last muttered to each other concerning the beauty or the weight of sundry articles,—sometimes, I thought, with no favourable allusion to Mr. McLoon and his proceedings. The sheriff's eye kept somewhat of the same watch of me that it had done the day before; while receiver Flagler's look and manner evidently showed that he considered me as some sort of a vision—without whose aid it would be impossible to get safely through the business.

"You say this is the one?—Take it along then—"

It was well I had my father's punctilious notions of honour.

"Wouldn't you like to have them 'ere green settees left?" said Mr. Flagler in an interval of directing the helpers.

"The green settees?" said I.

"Well I don' know what they be—them things out in the garden. Don't you use 'cm every day?"

I could not say yes—to my sorrow.

"Not at this season,—in summer we use them a great deal."

Mr. Flagler looked sorry too; he wanted to do me a kindness.

"There is another thing we should like to have left—very much," I said. "This large easy-chair in one of the bedrooms—it is a great comfort in case of sickness, and

such a thing cannot be borrowed in the country. If you could leave it for the present—and then if the matter should not be settled Mr. McLoon can easily send for it."—

"I'll leave it!" said the receiver giving the vision an extraordinary number of nods. "I'll leave it—at a

ventur."

"Such a thing oughtn't to be took, no how," said the sheriff.

"No, no-" said Mr. Flagler. "I'll leave it!"

Once more released, I went back to my writing; but soon the tea-room door opened and the sheriff and Mr. Flagler stepped in. The latter looked at us and then at his list.

"It's put down 'four maple-chairs in tea-room' "—he said. "It's 'most too bad to disturb you! Be them the

ones ?"

The four maple-chairs, (which were tea-room extras) stood there certainly—the only chairs in the room; but Kate and I immediately quitted the two we had in use, and informed Mr. Flagler that his list was correct.

"Wouldn't you like to have 'em?" said the sheriff.

"O no"—said Kate smiling; "they may as well go with the rest. Four chairs cannot make much difference to us."

The men had no words to answer; and while the chairs were carried off in silence, I perched myself upon a fourlegged stool, and Kate wheeled in one of the blue easychairs which belonged to us by virtue of inheritance, and

so were out of Mr. McLoon's power.

So wore on the day; and before sundown the last man of the posse, the last article on the list were out of the house, and we had gladly locked the doors behind them. Not because there was much in the house worth coming for again, but because we wanted some tangible barrier between us and those clumping steps, rough faces and harsh voices, with which our eyes and ears had been filled. The mere thought of any footfall but our own was painful,—our heads were almost in a whirl. But when the doors were fast, and Mr. Howard established before a blazing-fire in the kitchen, we went softly about the house to see how it looked.

Strange !-- strange !-- we realized that our drawing-room had four corners! It had been used to wear a sufficiently comfortable and well-to-do aspect, but now it might have been the ground-floor of a barn,—even the scattered wisps of hay were not wanting. Here was a dark stain in the place where some old picture or engraving had long greeted our eyes; -here on the bare floor little indentations marked the former locality of the ebony cabinet; while on the wall long dusty cobwebs told what had been for many a year the background of our univalves and conchifera,—here was a blank strip of plaster where once had fallen the soft shadow of our Hebe. Shadowy enough now !- the things we had grown up among were wafted away into dreamland,we should see them no more unless there. Our Hebe!it was Mr. McLoon's; and that last stroke of our little fairy's wand had conjured herself away with the rest. We almost wondered whether we were not some family of Smiths, just waked up!

Clearly the first thing was to have tea, with such an infusion of dinner as our appetites would warrant; and that

over we went to business.

Our sitting-room carpet had been left, because Messrs. Flagg and Flagler said it might as well be; and this once swept off we proceeded to test our resources. The half-dozen despised chairs were placed about the room with as little stiffness as the circumstances would permit—there being nothing to diversify them but Mrs. Howard's workstand and two odd taborets. Next the two blue chairs were brought in, and looked astonished to find themselves in such company, but very comfortable nevertheless. An escaped lamp stood upon the stand, and before it we presently set a small dish of late flowers "to make ourselves feel at home." The fire burned brightly, and everything rather surpassed our expectations; but—we had no table.

"What will you do, dear mamma?" said Kate. "Shall we take turns in holding the lamp? or shall we eschew work and be sociable? We never can sit round your workstand."

"No," said Mrs. Howard who had been thinking busily, "I have a better plan. We will take the little kitchen

table that holds the water-pail, and make a top to it of that moulding-board which is too large to use."

"And the first time papa puts his elbow on it, lamp and

all will go over."-

"He shall not put his elbow on it till he has screwed the

two parts together. I will have it done at once."

Done it was, and covered with a cloth, and then our room was furnished. But there was little else done that evening, though the lamp stood steady, and the nondescript table presented a fair field for work. We sat resting. Night before last at sunset everything was in fair, peaceful order, with no fear of disturbance; and now—everywhere but in that room it might as well have been an auctioneer's domain as ours. "Well"—as we all said when the subject was mentioned; but it took us long to get used to the change, and frequently we said "where is such a thing?—O—those people have got it!"

CHAPTER XLII.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring;
Not endless night, nor yet eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing;
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay;
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

SOUTHWELL.

SOUTHWELL

A GOOD part of the next few days was spent in making the house what Mrs. Barrington would have called "broom-clean";—and ourselves proportionably dusty.

"My dear Kate!" I said, "you look as if you had been

enacting Miss Brown!"

"So does somebody else I know of," replied Kate as she untied the handkerchief that was over her head. "I really think Mr. McLoon might have sent people here to do the sweeping. It is rather too much to take away all one's furniture and make one clear up after it."

"Perhaps he thought we should be too disheartened to

attempt such a thing."

"I wish we could enact Miss Brown, I am sure," said Kate, "so far as to have a good ride,—there has a small portion of this dust settled upon my mind and spirits. I wonder who has got our poor ponies now! O Puck and Mopsa!"—

"Poor ponies' indeed! I don't doubt they are as fat as can be. But we couldn't have much good of them—with

papa away all the time."

"I don't think he will be away any more—if he can get engineering business or anything to do in this region."

"That would be very pleasant! O Katie—it doesn't matter so much after all—the losing these things,—we have such comfort in each other!"

"A great deal, dear Gracie!" said Kate kissing me.

"Don't you think you would take still more comfort in each other if you were rid of the dusty dresses?" said Mrs. Howard coming into our room. "I assure you I find it a pleasant change."

"My dear mamma!" said Kate, "how lovely you look! -and what dreadful ideas you do suggest! Are we abso-

lutely not fit to touch faces?"

"Not quite presentable," she said with a smile; "and the sooner you are in order the sooner you can sit down and

"It is a remarkable thing how tastes may change," said Kate,—"I used to have rather a despising of calico dresses, and now that clean one of mamma's looked positively de-

lightful!"

We began to dress accordingly, still eyeing everything with a sort of wonder, and wondering at ourselves a little as well, for our quietness; but mind and body were too weary to be unquiet.

"Are you almost dressed," said Mrs. Howard coming up again. "Here is Squire Suydam wants you to take a

drive with him."

"A drive, mamma? Squire Suydam!" "Even so, Katie,—what do you say?" "O I should like it so much!" said I.

"How very kind of him!" said Kate. "I should like it

too-exceedingly."

"Get ready then, at once,—don't give him occasion to repeat his maxim about ladies and dawdling. You had better take the key of the front door with you, for perhaps I shall go out to walk with your father, -we can take the other, and you might get home first."

We were so quick in our movements that Mr. Suydam

was fairly surprised.

"Why-Miss-Kate!"-he said. "Confess that you had your bonnets on when I came."

""Yes sir," said Kate laughing, "we have been all ready for some time, expecting you."

"I-thought-so"-he replied, nodding his head at us,-"that makes it all clear. Now then, let's be off. Don't mind jolting, do you?"

" Not at all sir."

"That's well, for these rains have played cut and come

again with the roads."

So with a kind of bustling gallantry that became him very well, Mr. Suydam hurried us out to the little nondescript wagon (in no nondescript order however) and placing us on the back seat he placed himself on the front in a kind of sideway position—giving one eye to his horses and the other to us—or rather the corner of one eye,—which was perhaps his favourite way of looking.

"My girls," he said, as he cleared the reins and gave himself two or three little preparatory wraps in his great coat; "my girls Miss Kate, my nieces that is, are so fashionable that they won't hear of a buffalo skin anywhere but in a sleigh,—they'd rather be cold. I suppose you have

more sense?"

"I have a great predilection for being warm sir."

"Eh?" said the Squire—"I'm afraid that answer was a spice of the same thing—smacks of Philadelphia sadly,—there's no such thing as a straight road to market now-adays. Well, keep yourselves tucked up—the buffalo's clean—no need to be afraid of it."

And leaning back the Squire lent vigorous aid to what he called "our shilly-shally attempts at tucking up." It was well that our dresses were not too handsome to be

mussed.

The roads were indeed none of the smoothest; and we tried what our friend called "dive and come again" pretty often. A fine fresh wind blew from the north, and now swept up the fallen leaves into heaps,—now sent them dancing and frolicking off over the smooth ground in a way that often made us laugh. White clouds came drifting thick and fast, but the wind was sometimes too much for them as for the leaves; and would sweep us a piece of clear sky from which the sun shone down gloriously. On some of the trees their thin and faded tapestry yet hung; and here and there an oak stood in a richness of colour that was rather deep than gay, among its leafless neighbours. The ground had been too thoroughly wet for even that wind to raise a dust; and the whirling troops of leaves—gay and brown and shrivelled—skimmed and careered

about with every possible vagary; and said what a lawless

thing the wind was.

Everybody seemed to be abroad,—the Squire was perpetually nodding or touching his hat,—calling out to one man about grain, and to another about boards, and to another about his wife and children; while Kate and I sat quietly smiling at the odd answers and sometimes questions that were returned to him.

We passed our little mill—Mr. McLoon's now—working away with its foaming dash of water; and breathed just one sigh, not for the loss of the mill but for the associations, half sad half pleasant, that we had with it. Then a turn brought us by the Green hill whither we had so often walked; and another shewed us the Bird's Nest with its halo of recollections, and another the pretty, wooded slope of Jack's bean; while further yet rose Pillimaquady, so pleasant to us now in all its roughness.

Then come Mr. and Mrs. Carvill on horseback,—the lady in a perfect flutter, the gentleman taking the wind with his usual nonchalance; and we are honoured with quite a profound reverence from him, while her recognition might be only an involuntary tribute to the north-wester. And

Squire Suydam ejaculates,

"Fiddlesticks!—and yet there's some good in him too."

Then we meet Mr. Ellis quietly trudging along, with his never-failing associates—Dec and his good stick;—and his

bright smile goes with us for the next two miles.

"There she comes!" said the Squire apostrophizing Miss Brown in the distance;—"if I went out at midnight I should meet that girl scampering somewhere! I wonder her things don't all fly off from sheer inability to keep up with her!—Where now, Miss Harriet?—if you keep on at that rate you'll run over Mr. Carvill presently. Beats cockfighting!" he added half to himself, "that girls can't rest without being boys! Always at boys' work, and always wanting boys about 'em too!—If I was a boy, I'd see 'em further! Get up!" said Mr. Suydam impatiently to his horses.—"What are you about? Come!"

Again we drive silently on, towards home now, and seeing one after another of the familiar way-marks. Here we

had rested in some walk, here we had watched for the stage when we expected my father.

"If I don't mistake," said Squire Suydam, "yonder comes

one of your friends Miss Kate."

"One of my friends sir?—where?"

"Yonder"—repeated the Squire extending his whip in the direction of the Honiton turnpike,—"Mr. Rodney Collingwood—he's one of your friends, ain't he?"

"Certainly sir—but I don't see him."
"Don't you? well no more do I."

And as we descended a little hill the Squire began to sing to himself to pass away the time.

"'And how should I know your true love, From many another one?'
'O by his cockle hat and staff, And by his sandal shoon.'

That's one of the best ballads that ever were written!—
"Now Miss Kate," he said as we came upon high ground again, "don't you see a horseman away off on the turnpike?—if that's anybody else my eyes ain't as good as they used to be,—there's nobody in this neighbourhood rides as he does—I can tell him better on horseback than on foot. Ay, ay," said the Squire nodding his head and apostrophizing Mr. Rodney now; "you think you are going to get to Glen Luna first, but you're mistaken,—serve you just right if I turned about and went somewhere else—would if my horses weren't tired. Well you are in a hurry for once!"

"Do you really think that is he, Mr. Suydam?" I said.

"Ask your sister."

"Why my eyes are as good as hers," I said laughing.

"Are they?—well—ask your own then,—I've told you what mine say, Miss Grace. Is there anybody else you're expecting?"

"We are not expecting him, sir."

"Ain't you?-well he's coming, anyway. Now my

young sir, I'll try conclusions with you."

"I wonder what the conclusion will be!" said Kate laughing, as our increased rate of progress made us and the mud fly in almost equal proportion.

"Jolts?—does it?" said the Squire returning to his seat

after an experimental leap into the air. "Ne-ver mind—all good for the complexion. So!—Why where is that youngster going?"

"To the Lea," I said—"he always leaves his horse

there."

"Always does, does he?" said the Squire. "Never leaves himself there too, I suppose?"

"Not often," said I smiling.

"Thought not.—What's your idea of volcanos and earthquakes?" said Mr. Suydam suddenly facing round upon us. "Think they're nice things to subject people to, eh?"

But his quizzical look and manner made me laugh so,

that he got no answer.

"You're nothing but a simpleton!" he said turning back with pretended impatience, and driving furiously on till he reached our horseblock which was a little way from the house.

"Here we are,—there he is too. Now just sit still everyone of you till I've had my say,—if you're once out you'll be all off together and I sha'n't see the end of a bonnet-string in half a minute. Very good, Mr. Rodney—you may touch your cap and unglove if you please sir,—but you may not shake hands with anyone but me till I've done with you. Now what kind of a flying visit are you going to make this time?"

"Such a one as forty-eight hours can fly away with, sir,"

said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"Hum-well, come and dine with me to-morrow, will

you? or have you quite forgotten Slope Hill?"

"I have not indeed sir, nor any of its kind inmates, but to-morrow Mr. Suydam—I have just promised Carvill that I will dine at the Lea to-morrow. I will come and see Mrs. Suydam at all events before I go."

"Nothing to be done with you, I see," said the Squire shaking his head. "When are you to be quit of those in-

terminable Faculties?"

"In February," said Mr. Collingwood laughing.

"And then you'll go off in a puff of smoke."—

"A puff of smoke! No Mr. Suydam, I hope for a brighter discharge from the 'Faculties' than that."

"Hum"—said the Squire,—"well—I don't know—a puff of smoke's a reasonable bright thing—with a flame in the midst of it!"

It was a picture—but one to which I wanted the key. The old Squire sat half round in his seat, looking down at his favourite with the most benign and concentrated gravity; and Mr. Collingwood had hitherto listened and replied with all his usual frank and changing expression of face and voice. But at this last remark the eyes went down, and if the lips had parted at all, it would have been to laugh and not to speak. As it was they rebelled somewhat against control.

"I guess you don't want any brighter discharge than that!" said Mr. Suydam after a minute, his own features relaxing a little. "It's about good enough for you!—Just hand these young ladies down—if you ain't afraid to look at anybody—and that'll save me the trouble of getting down myself. Will you be all ready if I come for you again?"—

"Yes sir," said Kate as she sprang out; "we have en-

joyed the ride too much not to want another."

"Very well Miss—I'll come for you as long as you'll let me. And don't let that child get a nervous fever,—she's just primed for it."

Enforcing his words with a warning nod, the Squire

drove off.

"Is that true Gracie?" said Mr. Rodney with a look of mingled kindness and amusement. "What has happened

to your nerves since I went away?"

This was a hard question, for it brought back the disagreeable events which our long drive had banished. Kate and I glanced at each other in some uncertainty,—how were we to tell what it would give our friend so much pain to hear?

"It would not do to take up anything Mr. Suydam says to-day," I answered evasively, "for he is in a most unac-

countable mood."

"How long have you been at home?"

"Hardly a month."

"And have been enjoying it more than ever?"

"We were very glad to get back"-said Kate hesitating

a little,-"but-you know 'the mind is its own place'-

and things are not always just what they seem."

"I hope not I'm sure," said Mr. Rodney smiling, "for you seem to be particularly grave and absent. What is the mind's place at present? Have you sent it with Mr. Suvdam to Slope Hill?"

"No indeed," said Kate stopping short as we neared the threshold. "Mr. Rodney-I have been debating with

myself whether I had better ask you to come in."

"Well?"-he said with a very bright glance, "and how have you settled the question?"

"I think on the whole you will be most comfortable out of doors."

"Yes Mr. Rodney," I said, "you had best be content with this prospect—if you go further you may fare worse."

"What do you mean by 'this prospect' ?- the prospect of standing here till Friday and talking to you through the window? I think I must respectfully decline that, and

let myself in."

"No, stop," said Kate touching his arm with her hand, "don't go in yet-I want to talk to you. You have studied so many 'out-of-the-way things' as Stephanie says, did you ever hear of a family who were deprived of their Lares, or Penates, or whatever you call the presiding images ?"

"Such things have been," said Mr. Rodney with a smile; "but at present I think Mr. Howard's Lares are only out

of doors."

"But the difficulty is," I said, "they can never be got in

again—those that Kate means."

"And what does she mean?" he said, his look suddenly changing,-" nay, you must not talk riddles to me with such a voice. Come Miss Kate," he added, taking hold of the hand which had hitherto detained him, "what is the matter ?- I shall not let you go till you tell me."

"I am thinking," said Kate, half laughing because she would not cry, and with her eyes apparently fixed upon the lake; "I am thinking of a man who forgot that he

was wounded until he had to tell his friend of it."

"And whose friend thought the most merciful thing was to show him the wound quickly."-

"Mr. Rodney," she said, "do you remember Mr. Free-man's definition of a family in moving time?—'the house in one place and the furniture in another'?"

"Perfectly!" he said looking earnestly at her.

"That is precisely our involuntary condition." And turning hastily round, Kate opened the door and we entered.

How different things appear, looked at through other eyes and through our own! Never had the room seemed so bare, so essentially four-cornered,—we knew how it must strike one so sympathetically keen-sighted as the person who followed us. He said nothing however, and we having called his attention to one of the blue chairs that yet stood before the fire, ran upstairs to take off our things. One look we gave each other,—silently saying that the sight of a friendly face had more nearly unnerved us than had all the rough encounters of the past week; and then we went down to give at least the brightening effect of our presence.

Disregarding the arm-chair, Mr. Rodney stood by the table, which we had left strewed with law-papers—copied and uncopied.

"I will ask other questions when I am not bewildered," he said; "in the mean time will you please to tell me

what you are about here?"

"Only a little profitable amusement," said Kate looking laughingly up at him.

But his look in return had nearly overcome us both. "More profitable for character than health, I fear," he

said presently,—" you are looking pale."

"No I am not—" said Kate with some effort after voice and smile together,—"it is only a reflection—induced by these papers. You must talk to Grace about nervous fevers."

"I don't wonder Squire Suydam talked about them—there was more nervousness than strength in the hand that copied this sheet, certainly."

"But how do you know it was mine?" I said .- "Maybe

it was Kate's."

Mr. Rodney smiled, for the first time since he entered the house.

"That does seem like rather a random remark, Gracie," he said. "But is it absolutely necessary that this work should go on this afternoon? because in that case I shall petition for a pen too—or seize upon one of these."

"O no," we said, "it need not go on,—there is no hurry,—and this is nothing either new or dreadful, Mr. Rodney,

so you need not look grave about it."

But they were very grave eyes that watched us as we folded up pleas and demurrers, and put them away out of sight.

"Now," said Kate, "if you will just sit down in that great chair and look at the fire, you will forget all that is or

is not behind you."

"Put yourself in it Miss Kate, and you Gracie in that other; and I will sit here and look at what I like. Now tell me all that I want to know—all that you have been enduring while I thought of you as so happy and peaceful."

"Happy and peaceful we have been in spite of it," said Kate;—"a little wearied, a little tried—enough to make us appreciate friendly faces; but the confusion of the house did not reach far into our minds, and we have been much less cast down than I could have believed beforehand. Even papa, and you know it came hardest upon him."

"Very hard! it must have been."

"Yes, very hard; and yet we have taken it so quietly—it might have been so much worse."

His eye glanced round the room, and Kate and I could

not help smiling.

"You won't find the ameliorating circumstances if you look for them," said Kate,—"they address themselves chiefly to the ear. But shouldn't we be very unwise people to grieve over such losses when papa has tried to put a bright face upon them, and when we are so well, and so happy in each other? Cannot you take a sprig of true wych-hazel this morning?"

"If I do it will be from another bush."

"You see my dream came true, Mr. Rodney," I said. I could not quite understand his smile—it was for a mo-

ment so sad in all its affectionate sympathy.

"I very often think of Miss Easy's words," he said, "that she wondered how she could ever be sorry for anything that

happened to you; for it always seemed to work good and not evil. The goodness of God is so sure! so unfailing!"

"We have proved that," Kate said with full eyes. "But Mr. Rodney, I should almost doubt your remembrance of what Miss Easy said,—you are looking so very grave."

"One of the ameliorating circumstances does not appear quite enough for my comfort—I cannot take it upon

trust."

"If you would only take my advice and look at the fire," said Kate, "it would cheer you up amazingly—the walls of

this room are not enlivening."

"I certainly was not looking at them," he answered, as he rose to greet Mr. and Mrs. Howard. And nothing could have been more beautiful or like himself than that greeting. It was as if his full love and appreciation for us had but just then come out, and our misfortunes had but bound us together. My father felt half saddened and half cheered.

"You see we have had autumn winds in here, Mr. Rod-

ney," he said.

"The buds that are left are better than the leaves which have fallen, sir," said Mr. Rodney with one look of quick sympathy.

"Yes," said Mr. Howard—"if the next season were summer instead of winter,—but I think some of my buds

grow pale under this frost work."

Leaving Mr. Howard to explain and tell what he chose, we began to prepare tea; and that Mr. Rodney's eyes might not be shocked with any more dismantled rooms that night, the meal was spread on that smallest and most inconvenient of little tables in the sitting-room; its want of accommodation eked out with an extra chair or two. For this our friend had no grave looks,—and we laughed off the inconvenience and enjoyed the tea as much as possible.

Then when we had again drawn round the fire talking went on briskly for a time, and the flickering light made our faces perhaps seem gayer than they were, but was at all events a very hopeful, cheer-up sort of a companion. After

that came a long, unbroken silence.

"Papa," said Kate softly and laying her hand on his forehead, "have you any idea where your eyebrows are?"

"Not the least, my dear-you have the advantage of me."

"Couldn't your thoughts come back for a little while?" said my stepmother. "I think we are in great danger of

what you call moodiness."

"Mr. Rodney," said my father with a suddenness that spoke a mind far away from these last remarks, "I have been dreaming of a man who had a precious jewel that he wanted to give to a friend; but when the time came, behold there was no golden box wherein to put it!"

"And I have been dreaming too, sir," said Mr. Collingwood quickly; "but it was of a jewel so precious that its golden box seemed but the lead that held 'Fair Portia's

counterfeit."

"Ah!" said my father shaking his head, but smiling too, a little; "my lord Bassanio was a very sensible young man!—after he had seen the portrait."

"But papa," I said laughing, "he didn't know what was

in the lead casket till he opened it."

"Quite sure, Gracie?" said my father stroking my hair. "Well, my dear, I always believed that Nerissa gave him a hint."

CHAPTER XLIII.

I think if any thing was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another; and yet I foresee nothing.—Good-Natured Man.

T/ATE and I had a busy early morning of it. There was A the sitting-room to put in order and coax into comfortable looks, and the fire to make; and this too in very good season before any one else could be up. Similar kind offices must be performed for the breakfast-room, which was, however, much less amenable to coaxing. Do what we would it was but a bright fire, some lumber-room chairs (of which the original striking colours were much worn off); and the breakfast-table—standing on a centre-piece of carpet with a broad border of bare floor. The floor was very white, and the chairs very nicely dusted, and the table —we did thank Mr. Pratt in our hearts for supposing we might have a friend with us-had its old supply of linen, china and silver, minus the tea-set. And yet it looked very little like our breakfast-room,—though that stream of sunlight was certainly "heartsome," as we remarked to each other, and fairer than had ever entered our town house.

"If one could only get here without coming through that empty drawing-room—" Kate said.

"Never mind, this will look all the brighter."

We left the room to get warm at its leisure, and went to see about breakfast. Mrs. Howard had preceded us in this department, but there were still some light matters for us to do, while she *would* do others that she thought less pleasant. Those finished we took off our aprons and proceeded to the parlour.

I suppose the quick work and early rising in the cold may have made us look pale or tired. Mr. Rodney's face said as much, and Mr. Howard with a man's disregard of family secrets, exclaimed,

"What in the world have you been about?"

We gave him our lips by way of good-morning and answer; but while I seated myself at the corner of the fire my father held Kate fast, and repeated his question.

"What have you been about?"

"I have been—among the flours—just now," said Kate looking down and smothering a laugh.

"Doing what?"

"They wanted to be turned in a new direction—or at least they were too aspiring,—I have been reducing them within proper limits."

"At this time of day!" said my father.

"The only time of day when they usually flourish, sir—the flours of an hour which is popularly called breakfast-time. By some people this species is denominated Muffinaria Matinensis."

And covering her face with her hands, the laugh burst forth in good earnest. The gentlemen laughed too,—be-

cause they couldn't help it.

"You silly child!" said my father,—"what do you mean? Are those the only flowers you have been attending to?"

"Not quite, papa,—I have managed to pick up a little

heartsease."

My father drew her to him for another kiss, but looked as if he had found less than a little.

"What have you done with your 'Muffinaria'?"

"O they are safe—" said Kate smiling, though the bright tears were ready to fall. "I have delivered them into the delicate hands of 'Dency Barrington,—mamma insisted that mine were too robust for the purpose."

"Where did you find 'Dency Barrington?"

"My dear father!" said Kate, "you have certainly taken up—whose rule was it—for obtaining information, this morning! Suppose I were to give what is called a true American answer, and inquire how you and Mr. Rodney could choose such a shadowy corner to stand in, this bright day?"

Mr. Howard passed his hand once or twice very fondly

over her head, pushing the hair off her forehead and looking at her in a way that made reply hardly necessary.

"I once had a daughter," he said, "who would not have borne 'the loss of all things' quite so cheerfully. Can you be the very same child I brought with me from Philadelphia?"

"As near as possible, papa!—Only my notions have so much sense about them that they do not venture out when they are sure to be frost-bitten. You know none but very humble flowers dare shew their faces until settled warm weather."

"And are there no humble flowers for you to copy but

snow-drops?" said Mr. Rodney.

Kate laughed, and the snow-drop was very quickly sup-

planted.

"Why really," she said, "I did not think of that before—Gracie does look something like one, down there in the corner. But lilies are rather disconsolate—and crocuses rather pert,—and violets deal too exclusively in unseen influences—I don't know that there is anything left for us but snow-drops."—

"And the rose a-quatre-saisons"—said Mr. Collingwood

smiling.

But as my father remarked, that was hardly left.

"Nobody answers my questions," said Kate, "and I am

expected to answer everybody!"

"I must appoint a referee, if you have any more to ask," said Mr. Howard,—"I am going to my study. But you have the clue to my shadowy corner, my dear; and I daresay Mr. Rodney will give you one to his, if you ask him. Perhaps you can succeed in guiding him out."

Kate preferred another mode of tactics,—choosing rather to abolish the shadows than to find her way through them She stood still for a moment after Mr. Howard had gone, and then looking up at the referee with a gravity which

somewhat impaired his own, she said,

"Did you ever study botany, Mr. Collingwood?"

"A little, Miss Howard.—Not so much as some other

things."

"Never learned anything about the growth and cultivation of heartsease?" But she could not raise her eyes again for a minute after

his glance.

"Will't please you sit'? and give me a lesson in words?" Mr. Rodney said, gently installing her in one of the easy-chairs, and taking his stand at the back of it. "I believe I know heartsease when I see it—what about its culture?"

"Perhaps you know then," said Kate, her lips trembling a little but steadying themselves by degrees, "that it is a particular little flower, and needs particular soil and care. And there are many varieties,—some all purple, and some all gold; but I think the purple-dashed ones are the prettiest. Then too it loves the shade, Mr. Rodney, and thrives best there. If you put one of the fine ones in the full light of the open ground it will sometimes lose its deep colour, and the flowers will be smaller and all yellow—I think them not so fair. Some of the best I have grow at the back of the house."

There was a deep silence.

"Might one have the benefit of your thoughts?" said

Kate when some ten minutes had passed.

"One might—" said Mr. Collingwood smiling. "They were just two. The first concerned the exceeding good care I shall take of all the heartsease that ever comes into my possession—or guardianship. The second you may call a botanical question—Might not this flower, in of course a different soil and exposure, bear a little more of the sunshine and yet keep all its sweet fairness?"

"I must go and see to my Muffinaria!" said Kate springing from her chair. "I am certain that 'Dency is exposing

them to too much heat!"

"Gracie!" said Mr. Collingwood presently, "what are

you thinking of? will you tell me?"

"I don't quite know myself, sir," I said laughing—"I was just trying to find out.—My thoughts seemed to have got tangled."

He smiled.

"Have you really some of the true English heartsease? or was Miss Kate talking entirely from imagination?"

"O we have a number! very fine ones!"

"It is a very lovely flower!"

"And such a pretty name. But isn't it strange that the French name should have so different a meaning?"

"Do you think it is so different Gracie? it does not seem

that to me."

"Pensées?"-

"No,-thoughts are some of the best heartsease I ever had."

"To be sure—" I said, "that is true sometimes. But then to have it true as a rule one's thoughts must be in very

nice order and regulation."

"There is no doubt about that, Gracie. But then, as you say, I would not give much for the so-called heartsease which one's thoughts are at war with. Such is not a peace—it is only a truce. There is no way with your thoughts but to make friends of them,—then they will fight for you against the world!"

"If anybody is curious on the subject of Muffinaria," said Kate opening the door, "they are at present ready for

inspection."

She made a very bright connecting link between the room we left and the room we were going to, and I half hoped that Mr. Collingwood might notice nothing else on the way; but though I could not see that he looked about him, I yet felt sure that his eye sought one or two familiar places to find whether they were filled or empty. Kate and I both read it in his face when we first sat down to breakfast; but either other influences were that off, or Mr. Collingwood thought there was enough thoughtfulness afloat without his, for there was no appearance of it afterwards.

A part of that day was spent in a long walk; from which we returned to find Mr. Carvill managing his steed and his impatience at our door. Or rather our eyes found him there; for before our feet could get so far Mr. Carvill had espied us, and in the next minute he was directly in our path and with no apparent intention of getting out of it.

"Hope I see you well, young ladies" he said, uncovering,
—"hardly needful to ask—only you might not know so
well as I that your faces are in very partial concealment."

"Then it is quite unnecessary for me to ask you any questions," said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"Good morning!" said Mr. Carvill, as if but just aware

of his brother's presence, and then bringing back his attention to us. "I made so bold as to ride over after Mr. Collingwood this morning young ladies, because I was morally sure he wouldn't come if I didn't."

"Morally sure I wouldn't keep my promise?" said Mr.

Rodney.

"'Il fait toujours bon tenir son cheval par la bride'"—said the gentleman shrugging his shoulders,—"and Mrs. Carvill had set down her foot that you must come—so I put mine in the stirrup to make certain,—not thinking it safe to trust even your sense of duty. What do you say Miss Howard?"

"About what, sir?"

"Why—Stand still!" said Mr. Carvill, as his horse after one or two bridlings of the head took a sudden wheel, and was with some difficulty brought up to face us again—for which he was rewarded with a touch of Mr. Carvill's spurs and gave an eccentric spring in consequence.—"No occasion to be frightened Miss Kate—if I run over anybody it won't be you—I believe there is a contingent barrier somewhere.—But you see the advantage of this little manceuvre is, that when I come round again you strike me with all the force of novelty."

"It would strike me with all the force of novelty if you would come straight to the point, and tell what you are

after," said Mr. Rodney.

"I'll be after telling you presently sir," said Mr. Carvill politely. "Do you think now Miss Kate that anybody—that is to say Mrs. Howard of course—would object to Mr. Collingwood's dining at the Lea to-day? Mrs. Carvill is very anxious—and as I shall not see him again till the winter you can probably imagine my feelings—but—this creature is certainly possessed with the spirit of whirligig!"

"If you had only taken the trouble to go in and see mamma, sir," said Kate, "she could have saved so severe a

trial of his patience, and satisfied you at once."

"Do him good to have his patience tried!" said Mr. Carvill. "I am extremely sorry Miss Kate to have frightened you into anything like paleness—I shall not soon forget it,—but so far as I am concerned this interview has been per-

fectly satisfactory and well worth waiting for .- My mind is

quite at rest-wish my horse was!"

"They will be in some danger of growing pale if you keep them standing here much longer," said Mr. Rodney, laughing in spite of himself at the extreme demureness with which this was spoken. "Let Necker take you out of our way and home as fast as he is inclined to,—I shall not fail of my word."

"What surety?—you engaged in some interesting conversation—Miss Howard suddenly says 'Oh!?—whereupon you inquire, and find that it is nine o'clock. Meantime I have spent the evening over the Edinburgh Encyclopedia—article 'Social exchanges'—and can make nothing of it."

"It is not anywhere near your dinner-hour yet," said Mr. Collingwood gravely,—"your watch must be too fast."

"My watch is perfect, Mr. Collingwood. So is my fore-

sight. What time do you go in the morning?"

"Nine o'clock, Mr. Čarvill."

"Very good; and as I once had the pleasure of telling these young ladies—on an occasion which I would not for the world recall to their recollection—I really have some affection for my absent brother."

Mr. Rodney smiled, but then stepping up to Necker and

resting one hand on his shoulder, he said,

"What do you want with me Carvill ?—say quickly."

"Better stand off," said Mr. Carvill,—"if you get run over I won't answer for the consequences. What do I want?—this same absent brother of mine."

"But you will have him at dinner."

"See a polite shadow at the far end of the table—that's all. Therefore, to come to the point at once, it has occurred to me—that as the said dinner will not be served but in the neighbourhood of duskiness and atmosphere of wax-lights, you had better give me a little of your time beforehand,—as otherwise you might be detained till 'the witching hour of night.' In which case you might fall in with some hocuspocus, and not reach Glen Luna any more. Which would —to say the least—be a catastrophe."

"I will come immediately," said Mr. Rodney smiling.
"Have a care then!—'Otez-vous!' as my wife says to

the fag-end of her patience."-

And reining back his horse to give full effect to his sudden dash forward, Mr. Carvill bowed low and went off.

"Must you go to-morrow, Mr. Rodney?" I said as we

walked on to the house.

"I must indeed-absolutely."

"This is but a tiny visit," said Kate.

"I trust the absence which follows it will be short in proportion."

"You were talking to Mr. Suydam about February-

will you be here then?" I said.

"Hardly so soon as that, Gracie, I fear."

"But you will come as soon as you can? you will not let Mr. Carvill keep you in town?"

"I shall not let Mr. Carvill nor any one else keep me a

moment longer than I can help."

"Ah!" I said, "you do not know how few friends we have in this region, or you would not laugh at me for ask-

ing such a question."

"I think that could only be called a smile, Gracie. But I do know how few friends I have—anywhere—that are just what I mean by the word. Keep back Wolfgang—you must not come in."

Wolfgang wagged his tail, and looked at Kate.

"Is my authority transferred?" said Mr. Rodney with a laughing appeal in the same direction. "Because in that case, Wolfgang's mistress will please to issue her orders."

We laughed too at the dog's comical look, and upon the

strength of that he insinuatingly pushed himself in.

"It is the funniest thing!" I said. "He will do anything she tells him to, and will mind none of the rest of us if Kate is by."

"He is a remarkably sensible dog—" said his master,—
probably he has private reasons which he never told you,

Gracie."

"I think he will be almost as sorry to part with Kate as she will be to part with him, Mr. Rodney."

"And I think I should be the most sorry of the three."-

" Why ?"

"Why?—Don't you suppose I have a sufficient regard for the two parties in question to be unwilling to displease them?" "But you said the most sorry-"

"O you have no idea of the extent to which I carry my sympathy with Wolfgang!" said Mr. Collingwood laughing as he left the room.

"How much remains of that copying?" said Kate.

"Could we finish it to-day?"

"Easily—and maybe Mr. Rodney would take the papers

for us."

"That is what I was thinking of. But don't get them out just now, dear. Do you know next week papa is going to look over our old possessions, and see which of them we are entitled to?"

"I didn't know we were entitled to any."

"They are stored at Wiamee you know, and papa says the receiver took some which the law allows everybody—fifty dollars worth of books and so on. It would be something to have even that."

"Yes—something. But why mayn't I begin to copy?

it will soon be dark."

"Have those papers just been waiting for me?" said Mr. Rodney as he came in again. "I did not know but they were done."

Kate smiled.

"Does North Morris lie in your way to Rutland, Mr. Rodney?"

"I go directly through it. Have you any commands?"

"Only this same bundle of papers—it is rather too large to send from here through the post-office. Would it give you much trouble to take charge of it?"

"None in the world-if you will give them to me just

as they are."

"We will give them to you nicely done up and sealed, that none of them may get lost," said Kate.

"What are you going to do while I am away this after-

noon?"

"Now Mr. Rodney," she said, answering his look with a most fair one, "please do not ask any questions,—see how long the shadows are—it is quite time for you to go. And if you wear such a grave face at the Lea, Mr. Carvill will think witchcraft is abroad in the day-time."

"He would come near the truth for once," said Mr. Col-

lingwood. "I strongly suspect some conjuration to keep me here, for I feel a singular dislike to going away. Gracie, don't send out any of your familiars to hinder my coming back."

"O no," I said laughing,—"we shall wait tea for you,

sir."

We finished our copying, and then sat waiting in the twilight, and talking of what things we were to have per

favour of the statute.

"Papa," I said, as a sudden recollection came over me, "I want to ask you now while I have a chance—what did you mean last night when you were talking about gold boxes and jewels?—I asked Kate but she didn't seem to understand it any better than I did. Was that a real dream of yours?"

"There was as much reality about it as there is about

most dreams, my dear."

"But what made you bring it up? what had it to do with

what we were talking of?"

"We were not talking of anything just then Gracie, if you remember," said Mr. Howard looking down at me from his stand before the fire.

But he saw that I looked puzzled; and coming nearer and taking my hand in both of his, he said with a smile,

"It wouldn't be very strange my dear if after all our losses I should dream of gold and jewels."

"No papa-but then you were talking-I don't know, I

suppose I am stupid."

"Not a bit of it;—but older heads than yours, Gracie, have failed to follow out another person's train of thought. I was thinking of the want of what I once had; and Mr. Rodney with most discriminating kindness, reminded me that what I have left is far more precious than anything Mr. McLoon could take away. Do you understand that?"

"Perfectly, papa; it has been such a pleasant thought in all these troubles that nobody could touch any of us. And that was how you came to talk about Portia?"—

"That was how we came to talk about Portia, in her leaden casket,—much better worth having you see, Gracie, than the fool's head in the silver one. So you perceive

that if I had plenty of money and half a dozen silly children, I should be a poorer man than I am now with only vou and Kate."

"That might be, in more ways than one," said I laugh-"Ah papa! they would be poorer children too-un-

less one of them was Kate."

"And another one Grace," said my father kissing me. "Come over here and sit down on my lap. You would be a treasure of a daughter, my dear, to those people who like to have always a baby in the house. As for me. I am sadly afraid you will never grow up."

"I am sadly afraid you don't want me to, papa," I said laying my head down on his shoulder. "But how can one grow up unless one lives among other people?—I haven't any idea how old I am or ought to be."

"I said true," remarked Mr. Howard after a pause, "when I once called all these things trifles. How gently we have been dealt with !-even as regards this world it is only the least precious things we have lost; and the most precious—each other's love and sympathy and one-mindedness-are all left, all increased; and stand out in a full relief they could scarce otherwise have had."

"And we have learned to put a truer estimate upon

things," said Mrs. Howard.

"Much truer; my dear-having pretty reasonable eyes to begin with,—at least some of us. Certainly if poverty is not your niche, you have the power of filling more than one."

"Don't you think every true woman has that, papa?"

said Kate.

"Every true woman Kate, carries about with her a sort of india-rubber framework that fits itself to any niche where she may be placed; but at the same time one niche is better adapted to her than another. As one woman needs the drapery of wealth and circumstance; while another takes all the adorning upon herself, and makes you forget to look at her niche."

"And don't men have the power of adaptation too?" said Mrs. Howard smiling. "My memory would rather

say yes."

"Sometimes—" said my father,—" but they are more

angular and unmanageable, and not always content with their niche when they get it. Therefore they stick themselves into some other—a fact which everybody finds out but themselves.

"Here comes Mr. Rodney and now let us have tea."

CHAPTER XLIV.

Seek not proud riches, but such as thou may'st get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly; yet have no abstract nor friarly contempt of them.—Bacon.

To refurnish our house became now an object of effort as well as of desire. Those bare rooms looked very dreary in the cool weather, and to see my father's study supplied with but a pine table and a wooden stool, was more than a match for our equanimity. There was no question as to the propriety of making ourselves more comfortable;—the difficulty was to find the means. The bags of dollars we had once possessed lay about us to be sure, but as fast bound up in granite and mortar as the brothers of the princess,—only she did not know what the little black stones were, while the materials of our roads and cottages needed no explanation. If we ever got safe up the hill we might indeed disenchant them—those that were left; but many of our improvements had passed into Mr. McLoon's hands, and for all present power of doing us good the rest might as well have been there too.

We decided to buy nothing for the present, unless we could with one or two cattle and some other things which had escaped the levy get back a few pieces of our old furniture, a few more of our favourite books than the statute allowance would cover, and a small addition to our present stock of plate.

Again we went over the list to make our choice, and Mr. Howard was half inclined to merge the whole number of books and necessary articles in an attempt to get back the harp. But Kate would not hear of it, and even Mrs. Howard and I could not say that it would be wise, or that we could not better live without music than without tables and

chairs and carpets. Some of these which were not very handsome we thought would cost less than new ones, and large spoons and forks were desirable! But for all these we must wait for Mr. Pratt who was not forthcoming; and as the sheriff would not take the responsibility of giving us even the statute allowances, my father's visit to Wiamee was constantly postponed.

Meanwhile we tried what could be done without money,—with only draughts upon our strength and time. And yet there was pleasure in it, too,—strange as it may seem; but a sinking cloud is far less dark than a rising one; and we had so long felt as if some possibility hung over our heads, that the removal of it became a relief. Even though

it left our house empty.-

Then there was really pleasure in filling up the emptiness, -in making the rooms at least habitable; in setting off what we had to the best advantage. Contriving became a matter of amusement as well as of study. Old pieces of furniture that had lain for years in the lumber-room, being new varnished and rubbed up made quite a respectable appearance—now that they were no longer contrasted with ebony and satin-wood; and our few shells which had been quite outshone by more precious specimens, were now appreciated. Not by my father,—he rather shook his head at them; or indeed at anything that had but a pine table and cotton cloth to stand upon. But in general what had been slighted by the Howards in their golden dream, was thankfully made use of by the Howards in the mere leaden grey of the morning. And as everything looked better than we expected, we perhaps thought everything looked better than it really did.

So in a while we were quietly settled again; save that my stepmother said she should not feel quite at home until the house had had a thorough cleaning; but that could not

be done in November.

Yes, we were very quiet! Mind and body had both been wearied, and now that excitement was over, a stranger might have thought us downhearted,—yet we were not that —we were only quiet. Garden work was past, and we took long walks in the leafless woods to rest ourselves from copying; but they were very sedate walks, and Wolfgang

would sometimes look wistfully back at us as if wondering what had become of our old quick steps and laughing voices. Then at some word from us he would come up to be patted, and for five minutes walk very gravely by Kate; until the discipline of circumstances became too irksome, and he dashed off by himself seeing that no one would go with him. It was lovely walking there—with no sound but the rustle of the dry leaves, or the chirp of some lingering bird, —"pure, peaceful!" as Mr. Rodney had said. And when we felt less bright than usual we went to the Bird's Nest, to think of the soothing presence we might no longer see. At last Mr. Pratt came, and my father received notice that on such a day he might have a meeting with him at Wiamee.

Kate had gone upstairs and the rest of us were in the sitting-room, when Mr. Barrington, finding no one in the kitchen to answer his summons, came round and tried the front door.

"Here's some sort of a concern for you, Squire," he said—"leastways for Miss Kate. It's just as good to know where a thing belongs—and it's hern now, and no mistake!"

"Something for Kate?"—I exclaimed. "What in the world is it?"

"'Tain't much out o' the world—' said Ezra,—"Glen Lunay's seen it afore, any way. It had three gold feet to run away upon, though it ha'n't got only two to come back; but t'other one ain't broke—it's only come out like. If

the Squire'd bear a hand I guess I could fetch it in all the easier."

My father stayed not to ask further questions but followed Ezra to his cart, whence they presently brought in the only thing that short description suited, and the only thing I thought it could not be—Kate's harp.

Such a storm of exclamations and inquiries! Mr. Barrington felt overwhelmed, and prudently refrained from

answering anybody till all were silent.

"Well," he said then, "this is just how it is. I was up to Wiamee, and that feller that takes sich safe care o' your goods Squire, he hollers out to me and says he's got sun'thin' as belongs down here. So I said I knowed that long

ago—a good many of 'em. Well says he I'm a goin' to keep the rest, but this here jigum—some sort o' music they call it—has got to be sent to the Glen by a safe hand, and I guess yourn's about as safe as another. So I telled him I thought likely, and he had it fetched out and put into the cart. And I missed all the stones comin' down as if it had been a baby—I guess it ha'n't took no harm."

It did not seem to have taken the least. The missing foot was soon screwed in, and we were prodigal of our

thanks to the careful driver.

"But where did it come from!" I repeated for the twentieth time.

"Why I just telled ye"—said Ezra.

"I mean who sent it ?-Didn't that man tell you any-

thing more about it?"

"He didn't tell me anythin' at all—" said Mr. Barrington. "He just said it had been waitin' quite a spell for t'other chap to come and say whether he'd make up his inclinations to part with it, and then I come off."

"You are quite sure you were told to bring it here?"

said my father.

"I don't know!" said Ezra in desperation,—"I haven't any idee what it takes to make a man sure! But it's writ on it 'Miss Howard' as plain as that feller could spell—which ain't sayin a great deal—and I was telled a matter o' six times besides. I guess it's got to the wrong place!—

but I kint take it away!"

We were left to our own cogitations, and to examine and carefully dust off this most welcome arrival. In all this time Kate had not come down; and I did not call her yet, that she might have the full surprise of seeing her harp in perfect order and in open view when she entered the room. We took off all its wrappings, placed it just to our satisfaction, and then stood to watch the door as Kate came singing down stairs. The knob was turned and she came in.

Her eye saw the harp at once, and she stopped short with such a bright flush of pleasure as did us all good to see. But the next look was rather sorrowful, and she came forward saying,

"My dear papa! how could you!"

"How could I what?"

"Why didn't you get your desk? or a great many other things instead?" she continued, but giving her old favourite many kind looks and touches the while. "O papa—you should not have done this! I am very sorry!"

"I am afraid the person who redeemed it thought more of you than of me Katie; in which I am sure I agree with

him. I am very glad."

"You should not have done it!" she repeated gently—
"it was not quite right: there were so many other things wanted!"

"See here"—said my father laughing, "I can't submit to be blamed for another person's misdeeds—keep your reproofs till you get hold of the delinquent. I had nothing to do with bringing this home."

"Nothing to do with it? but you ordered it brought."-

"No I didn't."

"He doesn't know anything about it!" I said. "That man at Wiamee gave it to Ezra to bring down here, and nobody can tell who sent it."

"Papa knows nothing about it!" said Kate raising her head and looking at us all by turns. "Why what do you

mean?"

Mrs. Howard and I laughed for very pleasure, and my father replied,

"We mean that, Katie,-I had nothing to do with it."

"But you know how it came to be sent?"

"No better than you do-" said Mr. Howard smiling. "I was as much surprised as you are—for a few minutes."

"O papa!" I said,—"only for a few minutes! I think it

is the strangest thing I ever heard of."

"I don't wonder," said my father; "but you know Gracie even surprise cannot last always. Come my daughter—you need not give your harp so very close an inspection,—I know it is in order. Look up and tell me you are as glad for yourself as I am for you."

"Aren't you glad Katie?" I said. "We were all de-

lighted."

"My dear Gracie, my thoughts are absolutely in confusion! Where is the key? Have you seen it?"

"I see it now," said Mr. Howard,—"it is fast at the top

to that piece of ribbon—the very one it used to have, isn't it? But it is tied in some impracticable true-lover's-knot apparently,—much easier to tie than to untie"—he said as he watched her fingers. "Here Katie—let me cut it for you."

"It is unfastened now, papa."

"Then sit down and sing for me, will you love?" he said bending down to kiss her.

But she turned quick away, and ran off.

"She does not seem half so glad as I thought she would

be!" said I in rather sorrowful surprise.

"She is glad enough"—said Mr. Howard. "Did you never hear of such a thing as being a little too glad, Gracie?"

"O yes. But papa, who could possibly have sent it?"

"I shouldn't like to have to give an answer to that question."

"And you won't even try to guess, papa?"

"It would hardly be worth my while," said my father.
"You may as well let your curiosity die a natural death, as mine has, Gracie. Look at the harp, and be content with that."

I was very content with that, but my curiosity had more than one life. If it ever faded amid the keen pleasure of hearing Kate play, of seeing her pleasure, of sitting in the twilight as we had so often done, to hear the old favourite songs with which we had such loved associations; it revived in double force afterwards; and the very strong love and thankfulness that I had for somebody, went on increasing at the rate of compound interest because the principal could not be paid. Kate seldom mentioned the subject; but, as I remarked, she spent all her thanks for the harp in her frequent and happy use of it. When she was tired, when she had a spare five minutes, above all if she felt sad, this was the favourite rest and amusement; and none of us had realized the comfort we had lost till it came back again. The house seemed to be furnished now, and within sound of those sweet strings we looked upon bare walls and floors with indifference.

In a few days we had back from Wiamee the articles we had redeemed and that were allowed us; and having disposed them to the best advantage, we were established for the season.

Mr. Howard had followed out his intention of getting business as an engineer, or rather of trying-for there were other applicants in plenty. Some little he did get, but to live on with no more prospect or certainty than that furnished would hardly do beyond the winter. It was now January; when one morning Squire Suydam and two strange gentlemen jingled up to the door, and requested to see my father on business. Partly because the sitting-room was thus taken up, partly because the coming of strangers had made us a little nervous, Kate and I went out to walk; and, as we often did when our spirits wanted composing, we took our way to one of the many little brown huts that spotted the beautiful country in summer. Now, they were but slight elevations in the snow; often half concealed by some deep drift, and always with a snow thatch that hung over as if to shake hands with the snow beneath, and made the show of walls very tiny. Last night's white deposite lay unmelted upon several old bundles that did duty as window-panes; while some had been withdrawn, probably to do duty after a more legitimate fashion. But the open spaces looked very, very cheerless, seen as they were through the clouds of light snow which the wind carried about, and giving as they must free passage to both wind and snow.

We passed several of these dwellings, of which the style bore too divided a resemblance to the abodes of men and of pigs to leave any doubt as to what class of the former lived in them; and the one to which our steps were now turned was but little better than the rest. There was more appearance of glazing, but the chimney was but two barrels standing one on top of the other at the end of the shanty; and the amount of old rags and rubbish which the snow covered up about the door we knew from former experience. Even now a shred of dirty blue or flaunting red stuck out here and there—thrown down after the storm began or uprooted by the noses of the pigs; and such

snow !-it was all in keeping.

The mistress of the shanty was just preparing to make bread, for a large pan of mixed wheat and indian flour

stood on the table, flanked by a cup of most singularlooking salt. To accommodate these, one corner of the table-cloth was turned up, and disclosed the table boards as they came from, but hardly from under, the carpenter's plane. For the cloth of thin cotton shirting had been already laid for dinner, and that the viands were getting ready we needed no further evidence than the steam which filled the room. It was but a little place, with a fixed wooden shelf round two sides of it to save room and chairs; while the stove and a cradle had more space and spared less. A door opened into a very small bedroom, or rather upon a bed; and in one corner cleets nailed to the boards ushered whatever lodgers there might be to their sleeping apartment above. At present the square hole of access was surrounded with several heads and half lengths, which looked down upon us as we glanced at them-with a feeling of wonder how they got there.

Mrs. O'Keefe left her work and greeted us with real pleasure and gratitude; and very Irish though her face was, and covered with freekles, it was yet young and goodnatured; and had withal that touch of life's work upon it,

which is always interesting.

"And how is this little thing to-day?" said Kate looking

into the cradle.

"She has the chills every day!" said Mrs. O'Keefe. "O—oh!—the poor, little crathur!" she went on, addressing the child in a tone of mingled sorrow and playfulness that was sad to hear.

It was a very pale little face that lay in the cradle, and on it Ireland had set her stamp in very strong and not fair proportions, and the lace cap and pink ribbons were strangely out of place. Yet the face brightened at these words, and the baby tried to laugh,—but failing that it could only cry. It was a picture of mother and child! the same all the world over!

"He's got it the day too," said Mrs. O'Keefe indicating a head which lay in the bed on which the door opened, and trying meanwhile all manner of soothing words and motions were the little accurant of the gradle.

tions upon the little occupant of the cradle.

"And how is your brother?"

"O he's beautiful!" she said quite rapturously, and shutting up her eyes tight.

"And have you got quite over the chills?"

"I think I'll have it the day—it usen't to come on afore afternoon."

She looked tired and not well, and the child cried uncea-

singly.

"Mamma made you some more broth," said Kate producing a pitcher from under her cloak,—"you said your husband relished it."

"Indade 'an he did Miss! more than anything! Ain't I obliged to you for coming down! Only it's too much

trouble."—

"No, we wanted a walk. Is there anything we can do

to help you?"

"And to fetch the pitcher too!—Och hush! No Miss—there's little to do,—the dinner's nigh done,—there's just

the bread for the boys' supper."

"You are not well," said Kate,—"and this poor little thing does not like to be left alone when it's sick. If you'll give me the yeast and water Mrs. O'Keefe, I'll make the bread for you."

Mrs. O'Keefe protested, but Kate was determined, and throwing her wrappers into my arms (there was no other clean place—we had not even ventured to sit down) she

began mixing and working in good earnest.

I thought of the mower's lunch, and looked on with al-

most as much admiration as Mrs. O'Keefe.

Meantime the child went to sleep, and the mother examined the progress of dinner.

"What is in this kettle?" said Kate as she stood by the stove to dry her hands in preference to using a towel.

"It's gruel Miss-it's all I had to make for him."

"Well don't make any more"—said Kate with a slight shudder at the thought of any sick person's taking such a compound,—"I'll send you some. We haven't so many people to cook for, and can make it as well as not. And we have white meal, which is the best for gruel."

Mrs. O'Keefe could only repeat, "Indade I'm intirely thankful t'ye!"

A few words of advice and promise were spoken, and we prepared to come away.

"Will I send one of the childers wid yees to carry the pitcher? for fear it would get broke?" said Mrs. O'Keefe.

"What the one we brought down? O that can stay till

another time-you needn't empty it now."

"There's a mug, Miss, left ever since—and a dish, more than all!"

"It's too cold for the children to walk so far—we can carry the things under our cloaks—just as well as not."

Mrs. O'Keefe brought them, but still seemed doubtful.

"It's too much trouble!" she said.

"No it isn't a bit"—said we bestowing them as Kate had proposed.

"The Lord bless ye! and may ye never know trouble!" was her earnest reply, given with true lrish adaptation.

We walked on in silence for some time, our hearts too full to say much. It was very good to look at the trials of other people! And now as our own home came in sight how very fair it looked! the pure untrodden snow about it gave no sad suggestions; and if we thought of the bare rooms within, it was with very great thankfulness.

The strangers had gone, and Mr. and Mrs. Howard were alone in the sitting-room. But our cheerfulness received a sudden check as we came up to them. Mrs. Howard's face wore unmistakeable traces of tears—indeed they were not so far banished that she could give us more than one glance, —and though my father's face was more composed, there was something about it which said they had thought and felt together. It was not without some effort that he could tell us, that he had been offered a professorship in the new college at Ethan.

CHAPTER XLV.

Now is the high tide of the year, And whatever of life hath ebbed away Comes flooding back, with a ripply cheer, Into every bare inlet and creek and bay; Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it, We are happy now because God so wills it; No matter how barren the past may have been, 'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green. UNKNOWN.

THE sudden removal of a burden which had been upon 1 us till it seemed like a part of ourselves,—the resolving of all our doubts and uncertainties,—the assurance that we might live without being separated either from each other or our old home, was almost too much; it took us long to get used to it. What the professor's salary might be we hardly knew or cared, -my father had told us but · his words were unheeded. Just one idea could be dwelt upon-it was the "something certain" we had so long wished for! whether the amount were large or small little affected its value to us. We could live upon anything, if we could have that regularly. No one could imagine the happiness of such a prospect, who had not been through our long and trying experience.

Mr. Howard came to the use of his wits rather sooner than the rest of us, and began to introduce what he called reform measures at home. First he forbade us to copy any more,—then he issued an order against wearing calico dresses in winter; and then he insisted that we should get

some one "to take care of the kitchen."

Servants were got, accordingly,-to our great relief; and so far as one of them was concerned, to our amusement. Our little friend 'Dency Barrington was only too glad to come and officiate in that department which advertisements call "waiting and tending;" and marked her sense of the dignity of her new position by never appearing about the table, unless coiffed with a spick and span starched sunbonnet.

It seemed, as we said, as if every circumstance in this new turn of things was particularly pleasant,—even that one of Ethan's being so far away. For now, to make sure of reaching it in time and in all weathers, it was absolutely necessary that my father should afford himself a horse,—which he never would have done but for the necessity, and which we rejoiced over without stint. What a busy few days there were of arrangement and preparation! Some things to be made and some things to be bought,—we were in a little cloud of excitement and pleasure, and didn't quite know where we were. Only my father preserved his identity, and looked at us very often and with exceeding satisfaction. The little cloud was a pleasant medium to his eyes.

But the first morning we saw him ride off for Ethan !-

It was too cold to stand at the door, and we had grouped ourselves round the window to look out. And there with our eyes taking in the old style of dress and accourrements, -so long unseen about him! and our hearts looking back to other times and forward to new, and dwelling delightedly on the present fact that change of dress and relief of mind had made my father look like his former self; -both eyes and hearts grew too full. And when as his horse took the first step forward Mr. Howard looked round to give us one parting smile and gesture,—we answered it to be sure, but then left the window, and sitting down together wept as uncontrollably as if a sorrow had befallen us, instead of a joy. It was a long time before his daily going and coming ceased to be incidents in our life; or before we could realize that the putting the house and ourselves into such order as befitted my father's new position, was not extravagance but a proper outlay of money. And we had the money to lay out !- that was the most wonderful of all.

In the midst of this happy confusion of ideas and multiplication of business, I fell sick, and engrossed all the spare time of the family. Copying had been done away with before; but now all other work that could not be brought into my room was exchanged for the more wearisome task of nursing. Task I should not call it, -nothing made it so unless sorrow for the cause of it. And so evenly are things balanced in this world, that in every-day life it is hard to be very sorry or very glad for anything. I knew there was absolute pleasure in taking care of me; and on my part the weeks of moderate illness were well paid for by the love and tenderness they called out; and if gentle words and soft hands could not do away pain, they at least gave it a bright set-off. Yet be not too tender in a sick room-or at least show it not too plainly,-the word or look too deeply fraught with anxious love is more than the sick one can bear; when bodily weakness leaves every nerve and affection of the mind unprotected. I many a time dreaded my father's visits,-Mamma and Kate were so constantly about me, that we were in a measure used to each other. As for 'Dency-the satisfaction with which she entered my room was great, and would lead one to suppose that she would be rather sorry than otherwise when I got well. The little green sunbonnet was hardly less benign than the little face under it.

With the last winter days my illness wore off, and I was able by degrees to hear what was going on in the world,—to look at the work that was now often brought to my bed-

side, and to watch and talk to the workers.

"We shall have you down stairs again to-morrow, dear Gracie," Kate said to me one morning. "I hope you will be strong enough by that time."

"I shall be almost sorry, Katie—it is so very pleasant to lie here and see you and mamma moving about me."

"You won't think so when you are able to move about yourself," she said kissing me.

"Yes I shall—but I shall be glad to have you rest. O

Katie! what should I do without you!"

Again her lips touched my forehead from which she was brushing back the hair.

"Do you see what a beautiful day it is?"

"O yes—and I heard the song-sparrows before sunrise. You haven't sung with your harp since I have been sick."

"I couldn't bring my harp upstairs very well," said Kate smiling.

"I do wonder who ever sent it home! And I wonder what will turn up next—or if we shall live quiet lives in future!"

"Are you going to get up to breakfast, Gracie? or will

you have it in bed?"

"In bed-according to mamma. Where is she?"

"She went down stairs to see Mr. Rodney."
"O has he come! and have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"But when did he come?"

"Before breakfast."

"Why wasn't I awake, and well enough to go down!"

"My dear child! I wish you had been!" said Kate. "But here comes 'Dency with your breakfast, in good time."

"How do you feel this morning, Miss Grace?" said the little handmaid after she had set down her load and stationed herself to survey my general appearance.

"Much better 'Dency, thank you!"

"What a pretty day it is."

"Beautiful—and there are so many birds about."

"Yes ma'am. There's the most robins in the trees! I guess they was robins. Ain't it good Mr. Collingwood had such fine weather?"

"Very good!" said I with what gravity I could muster. And 'Dency went out of the room, watching me to the last.

There never was anything gentler than the care that was lavished upon me, or than the hands that bolstered me up, and then supplied me with all I wanted from the tray.

"What a strange thing it is to have chickens for break-

fast!" I said.

"I think we should have found ways and means to get

them for you Gracie, in any circumstances."

"But you see it is a great deal pleasanter to find the chickens.—This sickness would have come hard upon me a year ago—with the constant thought of how much it was costing."

"How often that has been in my mind!" said Kate. "I have never seen the doctor come without such a feeling of thankfulness! I suppose we should have had him just as

often, but I don't know when he would have been paid. Miss Easy might well tell us never to dread anything."

"And that, 'If we should be sick'! has been one of the most painful thoughts to mamma in all these years of poverty. But Kate I want you to tell me everything that was said this morning while you were down stairs."

"Everything?"-

"Every single thing. Where is Mr. Rodney to be settled?"

"I don't know dear,-he does not know himself yet."

"I hope he will be near us!"

"He will be near us for a while, Gracie—he intends to stay for some weeks at the Lea."

"At the Lea! why, isn't he going to stay with us as

usual ?"

" He says not."

"That is very strange! Then you have nothing to tell

me after all the talk you must have had?"

"Not much," said Kate smiling. "Mr. Rodney is very sorry you are sick—and said he would bring you some flowers, if he could find any in Mr. Carvill's greenhouse."

"I don't believe Mr. Carvill would approve of such a

continuation of his apology," said I laughing.

But the flowers came-beautiful ones; and to use Mrs. Barstow's words were "better than a doctor." They were doubly pleasant when I was able to be down stairs on the new sofa, and to take with them Mr. Rodnev's most kind and affectionate greeting and inquiries. Sometimes as the season advanced the greenhouse flowers were exchanged for a bunch fresh from the woods and fields,—less striking, less splendidly beautiful, but with no want of loveliness; and with perhaps more of character in their fresh faces, when one remembered the cold spring days and bleak situations when and where they ventured forth. Wind-flowers and squirrel-cups laid their fair heads together; and blood-root and yellow violets ranged themselves round the stiff furry leaves and sweet pink clusters of the many-named mouseear. And the great yellow cowslip tried to throw them all into the shade, and could not but with its green leaves. On one account I liked these best,-Mr. Rodney often told us in what places they grew, and sometimes of the walk in which he had found them. Occasionally he added an account of other things he had seen during the walk, but that was when he had gone with Mr. Ellis or my father. We knew him too well to doubt the nature of his own exploring expeditions, and therefore seldom asked for more information than he chose to give. Once in a while Kate was persuaded to take a ramble but generally she would not leave me, unless I was in one of those deep slumbers with which I tried to make up for lost time and rest. Nor always then; and glad as I was to have her go, my eyes always sought her the moment they were open; and perhaps it was well that she could only see the expression they wore when successful in their search. Often they went further then, and found Mr. Collingwood.

"Gracie," he said to me one day, when I had exchanged a waking-up smile with both himself and Kate, "you remind me of those flowers that contrive to look at the sun all the time—no matter where he is. They face the east in the morning, and then turn their heads by little and lit-

tle as the centre of attraction moves on."

"And you think Kate is the centre of attraction?" said I laughing.

"Certainly!"

"It must seem a little comical!—to people that don't

know what good reason I have."

"Some people do know." he answered with a smile. "But Gracie, if the sun should go under a cloud for an hour or two—or if the Moon should come between you and it,—what would you do then? shut up your eyes and go to sleep?"

"Maybe so! Where is she going?"

"I wanted her to take a ride with me to-morrow—and there is some doubt as to what this little sensitive-plant will do the while."

"This little sensitive-plant will not be in a touching mood—at all! Katie—you didn't hesitate about going

because of me?"

"She hesitated so far as to refuse pretty decidedly," said Mr. Collingwood. "Therefore I chose to defy prohibition and ask you."

"She shall go! I would give anything to have her ride

again—it would do her so much good. And she has been all these weeks shut up with me."—

"What kind of a privation do you call that?" said Kate's

voice and hand at once.

I kept hold of the hand and drew it down by my face, but paid no attention to the voice.

"What time will you come for her, Mr. Rodney?"

"At any hour she will name after eleven—I have an engagement which may hold me till then."

"But Mr. Rodney!—she hasn't a horse now!"

"But Miss Gracie I do not intend to have her ride without one," said he laughing. "Do you think my resources are not equal to that?"

"O I was thinking only of our own. I am very glad she is going! I am sure it will do her a great deal of good!

I am very much obliged to you sir, for my part."

"You are the best little sister in the world!—and have as small reason to be obliged to me as ever anybody had. Then Miss Katie—you will please to hold yourself in readiness for my coming to-morrow. But at what time?"—

"That question may as well be settled as the other has been," said Kate—"I think I will have nothing to say

about it."

"Then as soon after eleven as I can."

"Yes, that will be the best time," I said, "because papa always wants her to sing to him in the afternoon. O Mr. Rodney—weren't you glad to see the harp back again?"

"Very glad."

"Wasn't it strange? Did Kate tell you?"
"She said something to me about it."

"Weren't you astonished?"

"I should hardly have thought you could be, Gracie."

"Why not?"

"Astonished that anybody should do anything for your sister?"

"O but-not people that care about her, of course-but

people that don't-I mean strangers."

"I should think it probable," said Mr. Collingwood gravely—"so far as I am in possession of the facts of the case—that this unknown person must have belonged to the former class."

"It has made us so happy! We never could have replaced this one! Kate said yesterday that if papa could have got her a new one she shouldn't have loved it half so well."

"I said so, Gracie!"

"Yes-for I asked you. Do you think that is strange,

Mr. Rodney? that you smile at it."

"I should not be quite willing to call it strange, Gracie. But I am very glad Miss Kate is of that mind—since she has this and not another."

I was in my usual place on the sofa next morning, when

Kate came down dressed in her habit.

"I wonder if I ever had this on before!" she said.
"Look at me Gracie—does it convey any long-forgotten ideas to your mind?"

"It conveys some long-forgotten pleasure. Kate, you

look lovely!"

"Is that a long-forgotten pleasure?" she said with a laugh.

"No-But how came that to fit you?"

"First place, because for several years my nature has been aspiring and not encroaching,—second place, because the tiny alterations my dress needed have been made."

"Sit down here and let me see you."

There never was anything better deserved the name of pleasure. From the habit to the little cap that lay on the table, and thence to the fair head it was to cover—partially, as Mr. Carvill might have said—my eyes passed and repassed, more satisfied each time. I thought anybody might have been proud to ride with her! And perhaps my face bore a strong impression of that opinion—I thought Mr. Rodney's smile rather said so,—or at least I didn't quite know what it said; but I half fancied that he read my thoughts and agreed to them.

"I was under the impression that it was a bright day out

of doors-till I came in here," he said.

"The sunlight has dazzled your eyes," said Kate.

"Something has, I believe. Gracie, I hope you have a picture of Miss Kate to look at while she is away?"

"I have one-by heart," I said.

"And will you remember that it is the duty of little

sensitive plants to close their leaves in the sun's absence? to keep out of the way of falling dews, and all such uncomfortable things?"

"I don't know !-it would be hardly worth while for so

short a time."

His next words were spoken with that grave gentleness of look and voice which sometimes puzzled me.

"I wish you would make haste and get well, dear Gracie."

"I wonder what suggested that subject! But nobody is in haste about anything to-day, sir,—you came just when you said you would, but since then there has been a stay of proceedings."

"You know," said Mr. Collingwood smiling, "the centre of attraction enforces punctuality, but is not obliged to practise it. Miss Kate has been looking at you, and the

consequence is that she has but one glove on.'

"Well-neither have you, sir."-

"It is very clear that you know more of the duties of sensitive plants than of gentlemen! I shall not put on my other glove till I have had the honour of putting this lady on her horse."

I looked round at Kate, and I suppose my face again told my thoughts, for they both laughed, and Kate after one

farewell kiss declared herself ready.

The moment they left the room I left my sofa, and with a perfect disregard of all rules and regulations made my way to the window. I had no mind to be seen and sent back, however, and therefore seated myself in the shade of the window frame and curtain. The sash was thrown up and yet the curtain hardly stirred, for spring had a mind that day to try gentle influences. The cold winds had died away, and there was nothing more than the spirit of a breeze abroad—the very breath of love and persuasion. At its request the song-sparrows wore themselves out with singing and building,—and the birches and alders loosened their flowery tresses, and the lawn changed its dress with pleasure; while tulips and hyacinths made surprising efforts at getting up, and those earlier risers—the violets—opened their blue eyes, and modestly entered their claim to be, simply, the sweetest things in the world! The trees were leafless, but nothing could look unadorned in that soft light,

and the even deepening colour of their shoots said they were not idle.

I would not have it supposed that Kate was all this time in mounting her horse. But almost before I looked at the principal figures, my eye caught rapidly all the accessories of the picture that lay beyond the window frame,—the atmosphere—the tone and colouring.—Then it came

back with very undivided attention.

The horse destined for Kate had been held by a groom until she came out, but the other one stood quietly by himself a few steps off, with the bridle thrown over his head as if he could be trusted. Indeed I never saw Mr. Rodney's horse left in any other way; and it always seemed to me as if everything that belonged to him was under the same sort of regulation. And now though the fine creature pricked his ears forward and back, and turned his head at his master's appearance to utter a low word of greeting, he stood—as if horses had not the power of moving. It

was a pretty thing to see.

And a prettier thing was to see the groom's charge mounted. A long period of what the Spaniard called "walking on the earth" had lost Kate none of her old skill as a horsewoman,—her hand was as steady, her spring as light and fearless as ever,-I thought I had never seen her do the business so well; but that might be because she had such very perfect assistance. Her part was perfect too,—and I thought I was not the only one who appreciated it; for a few words which I did not hear had called forth a somewhat heightened colour, and a not at all displeased little laugh. I watched all the finishing arrangements with a strangely mixed feeling. I had often seen her on horseback, but never with so much pleasure—never before with anything like pain,—yet there it was now at my heart ;-I could not mistake it. How did it get there? I tried to find out. The particular pleasure was easily fathomed,—she had not ridden for a great while—it would do her much good-and as much pleasure,-I knew that from her face. But the pain?—I could not separate it from that last cause of my pleasure. I quarrelled with myself, and scolded myself, and reasoned with myself-to no purpose. Whenever I tried to see through that unac-

countable feeling, those one or two bright looks came up before me. I was not sorry to have her go and leave me -tears started at the very idea of such selfishness. I was not afraid,-Mr. Rodney's every look and touch told what care he would take of her and his qualifications for the office. If I had not been sure she would enjoy herself I would not have urged her going. There seemed some mystified notion in my mind which I could neither seize nor lose sight of,-some singular feeling of grief that she could be so very happy independently of me. And yet as I said to myself-"Of course!-how could I have any connexion with the pleasure of her ride?"-It would not do,-the difficulty was unanswered; and long after the horses were out of sight and hearing, I sat gazing out into that spring landscape which now seemed to have very little in it. Mrs. Howard came into the room and up to me quite unnoticed.

"My dear Gracie!" she said,—" what are you thinking

of! How long have you been by this open window?"

"I don't know mamma—I am not cold."

"Not cold! And such a pale face! What made you come here?"

"I wanted to look out, mamma," I said without raising

my eyes.

She said no more, but putting her arm round me she drew me back to the sofa and there I presently went to

sleep.

If I had dreamed strange things it would have been no wonder, for when I awoke it was to see Mr. Carvill standing before the fire and talking to my father. An exclamation was on the end of my tongue, but I restrained it; and having answered the gentleman's inquiries with a soberness which was certainly more sincere than his own, my eyes went across the room to the window. Then I saw that the deceitful spring weather had changed its mind, and was now sending down "prelusive drops" in reasonably quick succession.

"Does it rain!" I exclaimed.

"You may take me for conclusive evidence of that fact, Miss Grace," said Mr. Carvill. "Mr. Howard, supposing that I was compounded of sugar and salt in agreeable pro-

portions, suggested that the present dissolving state of the atmosphere might produce unpleasant consequences. And as it was a question where mistake might be fatal—there was no help you see—I was obliged to intrude upon the precincts of Morpheus."

"You forget, Mr. Carvill," said I laughing, "that

'Cynthia still doth steepe In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed.'

You are not out of danger yet, sir. But papa—has Kate got home?"

"I have seen nothing of her my dear, since I got home

myself."

"O do you think she will get wet?"

"I am afraid she will Gracie—if this rain falls upon her."

Sleep had restored my mind to its usual quietness, and I was all anxious to see Kate come back, and to be sure that the rain had done her no harm. It couldn't have done much, for the horses came with my wish. At the first sound I raised myself up, just in time to see Kate ride up to the door, and at the same moment Mr. Carvill moved forward as if he meant to go to help her off—then stepped back again with a look I could not comprehend. She would have been off without help had not her companion been too quick for her; and after that light spring down, she came in, holding up her habit, and looking as I had said before, lovely. Her first smile was a perfect cure of the soreness that yet remained from those strange thoughts.

"My dear Gracie!" she said, "you are—Mr. Carvill!"—and she stopped short with a colour that was by no means hesitating. But then instantly went forward and shook hands with "the curiosity" in a manner the most quiet and

self-possessed.

"You should not have seen me this some time, Miss Kate,"—said that gentleman. "Of course I could not be blind to your appearance—but Miss Grace has the first right—and it is no wish of *mine* to come between members of a family. Then here is my brother—"

Kate came and knelt down by me.

"How are you love? you don't look so well."

"Yes-just as well."

"I hope you enjoyed your ride, Miss Kate," said Mr. Carvill.

"Why, sir?"

There is something in simplicity that is very amusing to people unaccustomed to it. Mr. Carvill was nearly be-

trayed into a laugh.

"Can't answer—upon my word!" he said. "Had an indefinite idea that enjoyment might exist somewhere.—Will you ask why, if I inquire whether you got wet, Miss Kate?"

"I believe I should," she said smiling,-" because you

must see that I did not."

"Do your eyes ever turn states' evidence, Mr. Carvill?" said my father, who with Mr. Rodney had now joined the group.

"Very seldom, sir—their taste lies rather in the way of collecting evidence. But as Miss Kate very justly re-

marks-one must see what one must-"

"And never what one must not,"-said Mr. Rodney.

"I'll go home and reflect upon that—" said Mr. Carvill.
"Meantime the present company are fast disappearing from my sight—never knew my eyes were so well trained!
—Miss Kate—I salute your shadow,—Mr. Collingwood—will your visionship appear in full proportions at my dinner-table?"

"No," said his brother smiling.

"I am going to keep him here," said my father,-"and

you too Mr. Carvill, if you will."

"I thank you sir—I will not," said Mr. Carvill. "I have somewhere found out that in a dance of shadows the presence of a reality interferes with the pas de deux—in short breaks the illusion. Miss Kate—the bright eyes of shadows are proverbial,—will you give me ocular demonstration of yours?—and without exactly killing two birds—it is a possible case to kill one—and make the other fly away,—disconsolate, of course, but with the power of locomotion unimpaired."

It was not possible for us to help laughing; but Mr. Carvill went away with his gravity as unimpaired as his

locomotion.

"What has this child been doing to herself, mamma?" said Kate.

"Nothing except sitting at the window. Did you leave

her there?"

"Of course not!"

But I thought that those who stood round me exchanged looks—and yet I could not see that they did,—it might be only fancy.

"I should like to hear your account of the matter, Gracie," said Mr. Collingwood seating himself by my sofa. "What

have you been about since we went away?"

"Sleeping, part of the time,—and I was listening to Mr. Carvill—and a while at the window."

"And what were your thoughts doing?"

"They were-busy-" I said.

"Do you remember Gracie that you and I once found out

that thoughts are good heartsease?"

"Mine were not in good order to-day," I said, with a sorrowful recollection of how far they had been from hearts-ease.

"Not in good order?" he said gently-" what was the

matter with them?"

"I don't know sir—I couldn't quite get at it.—I don't wonder you look grave Mr. Rodney—but it is easier to know a thing is wrong, sometimes, than to help it."

"My dear child, I was not looking grave about that—I haven't found out that they were wrong. Is this what has

made you look pale?"

"I don't know—" I said with a long breath—" my thoughts have been in a strange mood, and I couldn't tell why—I believe that tired me."

"Have been, or are?" he said with a look as if he had translated my dark thoughts and didn't see much harm in them.

"O have been," I said, feeling soothed—"and my sleep rested me,—and I was so glad to see Kate again."—

"Were you satisfied with your sister's horse?"

"O yes," said I smiling.

"And didn't you admire the way she mounted him?"

"Very much."

"You would have admired her management altogether,

if your eyes could have followed us. It is a great pleasure to see anything thoroughly well done."

I was a little too pleased to answer except by a smile.

"If you had been well, and at the other side of me," he went on, "Miss Kate would have enjoyed the ride exceedingly—so she said."

"O she did as it was!" I said earnestly—"I know she

did! She was looking so well when she came in."

"And so she did all the time she was out," said Mr. Collingwood. "But I think Gracie, your sister hardly considered the colour that came into her own cheeks a sufficient indemnification for the very pale ones she had left at home."

"I am so sorry! she should not have thought of me at all! Katie," I said as she came down from changing her dress, "Mr. Rodney has troubled me so much by saying that you didn't enjoy your ride because of me."

"Mr. Rodney's remarks were not characterized by his

usual exactness."

"Nor Miss Gracie's"—said he with a smile. "I mean he said what made me think so."

"You think wrong, dear Gracie; I enjoyed it very much."

"More than any one you ever took? I wanted you to."

"Quite enough to satisfy anybody that is anxious on the subject, Gracie—" she said,—" as much as I could with you sick at home. Will that satisfy you?"

I was perfectly satisfied, and lay hearing them talk, with

unalloyed pleasure.

The spring wore on, and by the time I was well enough to go out everything was in such a state that it would have been a trial to stay in. So I used to wander about the garden, finding health and enjoyment in every fresh blade of grass and good-humoured-looking daffodil. Sometimes with Mrs. Howard sometimes with Kate, I used to walk myself tired, come in and rest, and go out again.

I had come in from my morning walk one day, and Kate had left the room; and bonnet in hand I stood half deliberating whether I would not go once more down the walk—it

looked so pleasant.

"Grace," said my stepmother raising her eyes from her

work, "do you know that we are to have neighbours again

at the Bird's Nest?"

"In Miss Easy's cottage! O I am glad!—I should like to get in there once more. But how could he let it!—Who are they, mamma?"

"Who do you think?"
"I can't imagine."—

Neither did I; and yet what was it that laid a heavy hand upon my heart as I saw the smile and heard the tone with which her last words were spoken? Why did I feel myself change colour and my voice lose steadiness as I repeated,

"Who is it?"—

And she answered, "Mr. Collingwood and Kate."

CHAPTER XLVI.

My heart is not so light as it was i' the morning.

Ben Jonson.

WAS I glad?—I did not know. Was I sorry?—I did not know that either. Would I have undone it if I could ?-No, not for the world! and with that I was obliged to rest content. Rest! never was anything less resting than my mind. I turned without a word, went out of the room and out of the house, and giving the reins to my feet, wandered on unconsciously till I reached a little hidingplace in the woods.—a cleared spot to which the evergreen undergrowth left but one opening. There I sat me down and tried to think, -but it was like the rush of the whirlpool; from which every now and then came up myself as a half wreck, with this one colour nailed to the mast—"Kate going to leave me!"-That thought was distinct, all the rest maze and confusion; and I sat with my hands pressed on my forehead, listening to the whirl within, till I was bewildered. I could steady my mind with nothing, -- the twitter of the birds, the play of the branches, the many sounds that fill the woods of a spring day, all seemed thrown into that vortex.

There came suddenly to my ear a short quick bark—and that roused me. I knew the voice well,—it was Wolfgang's; and not doubting that his master was with him I crouched closer in my concealment. I would rather have seen anybody in the world than Mr. Collingwood, at that instant; and as his quick step and the bounding frolic of the dog came nearer, I held my breath as if the thicket were not sufficient to hide me. Nor without reason. Wolfgang stopped his bark and his bounds, together; and with his keen nose to the ground he tracked my footsteps,

till with one spring he was at my feet and licking my hand. And Mr. Collingwood followed.

"Well!" he said,-"you are embowered here with a

witness!"

I looked up, and smiled or tried to smile as usual;—but his eye was too keen.

"You are not well," he said anxiously,-" you are very

pale: dear Grace, what is the matter?"

And with one look at him my head sank, and I poured out all my confused thoughts and feelings, doubts, hopes, and uncertainties, in a passionate flood of tears.

He sat down by me, but did not speak for some time; and then softly passing his hand over my head as he was

wont, he said gently,

" And I am the cause of all this sorrow!"

"No sir—" I faltered,—" at least, yes sir,—but I am very glad."

"And very sorry.—I can understand that."

"No sir you cannot," I said, forcing myself to speak calmly, for the tone of his voice was more than I could bear. "You cannot understand it yet."

"Not yet?" he said inquiringly.

"No-for you do not know what Kate is yet."

"I think I know a little about it; but dear Gracie I am

not going to take Kate far away from you."

"No sir—but—you have never lived in the house with her,—you do not know what it would be to have her even half a mile off."

"I have tried living half a mile off myself," said he smiling,—"so I ought to know something about that too. And if I had ever needed anything to quicken my appreciation of your sister, the love of her little sister would have done it."

There was some comfort in that, though it bowed my

head again; but less bitterly.

"And I have thought—I am sure—that she never loved you with such full affection as since I have had some claim upon her. Isn't it true?"

One quick glance my mind sent back, and I answered

yes. But the pain of that glance!

"Then cannot you trust her for the future?" he said

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gently, and as if he knew and felt all that I did. "My dear child—what shall I say to you?—I cannot bear to see

you do so."

"Nothing sir—please don't say anything to me just now; and don't think that I am sorry—for indeed I am very glad,—and if she were going anywhere else I could not be glad at all."

If tears could confirm a declaration, this was signed and

sealed.

"O Mr. Collingwood!" I said, looking up after a while, why did you come in here after Wolfgang!"

"I am most glad I did."

"And I am so sorry!—you will just think that I care nothing about you, and that I care more for my own hap-

piness than her's."

"I shall think nothing of the sort, Gracie—unless you take up that ceremonious name of 'Mr. Collingwood,'—I may suppose then that you are unwilling to make a brother of me."

"But Mr. Rodney," I said, "how is it that you can live

here? you have not given up preaching?"

"No-I could not do that, even to live here; but there have been a good many things done since you were well enough to hear of them. I have been called to your favourite little church."

"To assist Mr. Ellis?"

"Mr. Ellis has resigned this charge for one at Ethan."

"O I am so glad! I was afraid it would never be,—the very thing Miss Easy wished!—and then—" but the words would not come.

"She wished more than one thing that you have learned to-day, Gracie. But now look up and tell me—are you willing to take that long-ago-refused title of Miss Howard?—willing to have the objection to it removed?

"Very sorry still," he repeated as he looked earnestly in my eyes—for I attempted not to speak. "I cannot

wonder!"

And then reminding me that I had been sick, and ought not to stay out longer, Mr. Collingwood put my hand on his arm and brought me to the house with as much care and gentleness as if I had been a baby sister.

There was no one in the sitting-room, but as I ran up stairs Kate met me.

"Where have you been, Gracie?" she said with an anxious look, and laying her hand upon my shoulder. "Where are you going?"

"To brush my hair—one minute,"—I said breathlessly.

"You will come right down?—you promise me?"

"Yes," I said, giving her one kiss; and then quickly escaping I ran up to my room—but it was to throw myself on the bed in a new burst of tears,—again so sorrowful, so bewildered. Nothing could have stayed them, but my promise and the fear of Kate's coming for me. But I must compose myself and go down, and I did; and seating myself on a low seat by her's, I laid my head on Kate's lap without a word, and with her hand drawn round my neck.

For a while they talked on,—of Miss Easy and all her love and loveliness, of the years before and the years since we came to Glen Luna; but now and then the slight tremor in Kate's voice, or the clasp of the fingers I held, told where her thoughts were—and it almost broke my heart to have her grieved for me. Then Mr. Rodney left his seat, and came round and took one at the side where I sat.

"Gracie," he said, gently touching his lips to my cheek, "I wish you would look up and talk to me. Are you asleep?"

"No sir—I was listening—and thinking."

"Trying to make out whether you have any liking for one of your old friends left?"

"Oh no,-it wouldn't take long to do that."

"What then?-which of us is most to blame in this matter?—whether it is all my fault, or whether your sister has some share in it?"

"Ah Mr. Rodney!" I said,—"please don't make me

laugh."

"I wish I could,—I should feel more disposed to laugh myself. As it is, I am like to go away with the heartache."

"You mustn't go away sir, while you feel so."

"And how am I to get over feeling so?" he said with a smile at my peculiar mode of consolation. "Gracie, shall I follow Macbeth-who

'Chid the sisters, And bade them speak to him'?"

I smiled a little too, but it was very sadly that I answered,

"There wouldn't be but one to chide, Mr. Rodney."

"And if I should think that one to be your sister?" said Mr. Rodney with a gentle effort, not at separating our hands, but at taking them away from my face and into his own keeping. "What would you say to me then, Gracie?"

"I don't know sir-I should wait to hear what she would

say."

"If I thought it would make her say anything, I believe I should try. Gracie there is one wish I have had at heart for a long time,—will you help me to carry it out?"

I was silent—I could not speak.

"Not the wish you think I mean," said he smiling and gently drawing back my hair—"I cannot admit any question about that. But it has grieved me very much to see this dear sister of yours look as grave as she has done within the last two or three years, and I have promised myself that she shall never do so again if I can help it. You must help me,—how can her face be anything but sad if such a sorrowful little reflection falls upon it? Look at her dear Grace," he added softly, "and see if I speak without reason."

I did not venture to do that; but Mr. Rodney had touched the most powerful spring of self-control, and I did raise my head and leaned it against Kate. And then—it might have been because I thought myself so strong in my resolution—something in the touch of her arms as she put them round me, threw down all my defences; and I burst into such tears as I never meant she should see.

I could have chidden myself then, severely; but no one else attempted it,—unless I could feel reproved by other tears, which fell as fast as mine, or by the exceeding love and gentleness of the attempts which were made to soothe us both. They were successful at last, and I rested wearily from the excitement which had tried too severely my half-regained strength. If anything could have put the mind to rest as well, it would have been the fond lips that now and then kissed my forehead, and the consciousness that

they were trembling yet. So Mr. Rodney left us; but the moment he rose I looked up at him.

"Mr. Rodney-have I troubled you very much?"

There was no chiding, there was nothing but sympathy in the eyes that answered even before his words did.

"Not more than you could help, dear Gracie."

"I am very sorry!—you must not think—please do not!—"

"Please do not think that you love Kate a bit too much?" said he smiling. "I am in no danger of it, though you give me the credit of knowing so little about her. And as to her love for you—I'm afraid I must submit to that as a necessary part of human nature. Katie, cannot you persuade this child to adopt my philosophy?"

There is a great comfort in being understood,—the mere assurance that I might feel as I chose, made me feel as I could have wished; and I returned Mr. Rodney's parting shake of the hand with a very much brighter mood than

the one in which I had greeted him.

I had no desire to ask many questions, nor in truth much need,—it seemed as if my mind had answered them all to itself; and I lay silent and quiet in Kate's arms for a long time, going over the last two years wonderingly.

"Gracie!" she said at length.

My arm which was round her waist answered for me that I was awake.

"I want to hear your voice again, darling, very much."
"I will say everything you want me to, Katie—by and by"—was all I could say then.

"Are you quite sure?"

"Quite! But oh Katie! why didn't you tell me before?"

"My dear Gracie! how could I?—I had not the heart to speak of it after your dream—especially when there has been so much else to trouble you. But for that you should have known it long ago. And lately you have been so unwell."

"I am very glad!"

And wrapping her in an embrace so close that it half belied my words, and with her head bent down and resting upon mine, sleep came to me without asking. "Well little dormouse," said Mr. Howard who stood by us when J awoke. "Have you quite slept off the 'winter of your discontent'?"

"I haven't uncurled myself yet, papa."
"I wonder if it's the fashion for dormice to look pale," said my father kissing me.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Nor have I yet the narrow mind To vent that poor desire That others should not warm them at my fire: I wish the sun should shine On all men's fruits and flowers as well as mine. BEN JONSON.

I WAS awakened from my dream new only wonder was that it had lasted so long. I marvelled WAS awakened from my dream now-thoroughly; the at my own want of penetration. And yet the simple, familiar, almost brother-and-sister intercourse which had gone on for years, had changed so gradually—so slightly unless one took just the right point of view-that my mistake seemed after all, but natural.

For a while I was in a perfect hedge of constraint. Listless and weary, but with a constant effort to seem neither, -doubtful where to be or what to do,-having no spirits to go out, and a great fear of being in the way, within,that first week was one of trial. I could not bear to look anybody in the face-least of all those two who most anxiously scanned mine; and the very fear of troubling them, troubled me more than anything. Yet my hedge could

not but give way before their gentle endeavours.

I would not venture to assert that they were never without my company, but there was little appearance of it. all the long walks and talks where I was drawn in by one or the other, Mr. Rodney seemed at least as unforgetful of "his sister" as of mine.—always best pleased to have us both with him, and assuming as he said, somewhat of a brother's authority in the way of taking care of me and making me take care of myself. Seldom as I was left alone to my musings, I was never indulged in them unless alone; and often with my hand and Kate's held together in his, Mr. Rodney made me talk whether I would or not.

And this gentle consideration softened, O how much, what would else have been so bitter. We were not separated yet—I knew we never should be, in heart; and I was half beguiled into being happy in spite of myself. Never had Kate seemed to love me so much,—never had I so clung to her. Well for me that my love reached the point it did,—had it fallen a little short it might have been selfish. But I was right—I could not be miserable if she was

happy.

It was some time before I ventured to ask when they were to be married: many a time my lips formed the words, but uttered they could not be; and the rest of the family had seen fit to follow my lead. Yet I must know—I must find out,—that indefinite dread was worse than any certainty; and one day when Mrs. Howard had left me alone for a few minutes, I took the desperate resolution of asking her the moment she came back,— I would end these wearying doubts at all hazards. And the moment the door opened, I said in a voice that might of itself have told my question.

"Mamma—how soon"—

But something in the step made me turn round,—it was

Mr. Collingwood.

"How soon what, Gracie?" he said, coming behind my chair and laying a hand upon either side of my face. "What do you want to know? cannot I answer you as well as Mrs. Howard?"

Ay-but I could not ask him.

"What were you inquiring about?" he said kindly,—
"anything that concerns the person you and I love so
much? how soon I am going to take her away—was that it?"

"Yes," I said under my breath.

"Gracie, would it be a harder parting in summer weather when you could see her every day, than in winter—when storms must often keep you at home?"

I had no need to ask more, and yet I did. "Have I the alternative, Mr. Rodney?"

"I hope not," he said gently.

But "summer weather"!—it was almost that now! I

had not expected quite such an answer,—or rather, as has been well said, I "did not know how much hope had survived within me till I felt its death-blow." Had I been alone my excitement might have found its way in tears, but they did not come now; and the quick beating of my heart was all I could hear—almost all I could feel,—I felt that to my very finger-ends.

"My poor child!" Mr. Rodney said, "I thought you had made up your mind to this,—does it grieve you so much

still ?"

"No," I said, struggling with myself, "it does not grieve

me, at all-except-sometimes."

"Those times will be less frequent in the dreaded summer weather than they are now, dear, I trust. It is only a slight remove, Gracie,—you must not call it a separation. It will not be that,—unless you are a perverse little sister and refuse to feel at home in your brother's house. Have you had a walk to-day?"

"No sir."

"Then what if you were to tell Katie that Mrs. Barstow begged me to bring 'those dear young ladies' to see her

again, and that I am going there this morning."

I sprang away to give the message, choking down my thoughts that Kate might not see them, and with the full intention of not coming back; but she would take no denial, and I could only get ready and follow her down stairs. Where Wolfgang had nigh put me in hysterics. For as it was a mild day the door stood open, and the aforesaid member of society had planted himself on the outside, having received no permission to enter. But the appearance of Kate was considered invitation enough,—the dog rushed in, and after making of himself a frisking barrier for some moments, sat gravely down and presented his paw to Kate before she could even shake hands with his master.

The laugh which ensued was almost too much for me; and a mere negative composure was all I could attain for some time. But before we were half-way up Pillimaquady, I was again talked into being happy in spite of myself.

We could not wonder at Mrs. Barstow's love for Mr. Collingwood—he seemed the very spirit of sunlight in that dark little cabin; a sunlight so pure, so pervading, so

brightening to the darkest thing it touched, that the mind's eye looked wonderingly. Even the children felt its influence, and forgetting their rags and their shyness they came out from their corners, and stood near the well-dressed gentleman to see and hear him more distinctly. And then when he looked at them—though they knew him pretty well too—the smiling glance of his eye and pleasant word would make them smile in return—shamefacedly; and fall huddling back upon each other until he turned his head,—when they were again drawn forward by some irresistible magnet.

With what pleasure we saw it all! And I—it seemed to me that I had as much to rejoice in as anybody. To see Kate anything but happy had been almost the greatest trial I had ever thought of; and now to have her happiness so well secured—even to my jealous fears—was very pure de-

light.—Not unmingled, but unalloyed.

I sat a little back from the rest, looking at them and thinking it all over. I remembered what Mr. Ellis had once said, that there was just one person who ought to have the charge of that neighbourhood, and he the one who was now to take it. Truly I had no doubt on the subject; but as I looked at the sweet face by him, I thought there would be more than one place well filled. Mr. Rodney had contrived to bring her forward, and to place her in not quite the seat she would have chosen; and I half fancied that the reason thereof was not unguessed. It was easy to read Mrs. Barstow's wish,—the expression of her face was sometimes a little too much for Kate's equanimity; and her eyes went from one to the other with a look that said her own trials were all out of sight. There could hardly have been a better cure for them than the conversation she had with Mr. Rodney, or than his prayer before we came away.

"He often comes," she said when Kate and I were bidding her goodbye, and our companion was speaking to Mrs. Flinter. "Think of him never forgetting us and he so much else to think of!—he's been a'most every time he's been home! Ah Miss Howard, poor folks wants more than money!—and 'tain't often as rich folks knows what to give 'em. And now he'll be here always! I never thought to

see that."

We left them, and coming down the hill found near the foot a seat so pleasant, that we felt tired at once and sat down to rest. Everything was in great beauty;—the trees not far enough out to quite merge in each other, shewed in soft green tufts on every hill-side where the plough and the axe had not been; and the cleared land was in colours as diversified as its own ups and downs of surface. Sometimes a patch of winter grain in that luxuriant state between vouth and middle-age, came over a roll of land into the valley and ascended it might be another rising, following every turn and change with its spread of green the most vivid, the most beautiful! one uniform tint, unless where the wind waved it or a shadow fell. Light clouds passed occasionally across the sky, throwing as light and fantastic shades, that danced off the moment they touched the earth, to be succeeded by others. The birds were joyful as only birds can be; but we were joyful too—yet with a difference. Now the young leaves flapped softly over our heads, and now the wind died quite away, to come again with new

"That is a singularly happy person," Kate said when we

had sat musing for a while.

"Yes—if you mean uncommonly,—in one sense there is nothing singular about her happiness."

"Do you think so Mr. Rodney?—in that absolute rising

above all circumstance and suffering?"-

"Is it strange dear Kate, that now and then one should reach a point which all may attain?"

The starting tears were her only answer.

"It will do for me to talk about it," he said presently,—
"I, who have nothing left to wish for in this world,—I fear I should have been a poor example of my own precepts. But Katie, they are true, nevertheless. The soul whose balance depends on circumstance, hath not a firm enough hold on the Rock of ages."

"Yes, I know that—I have felt it—how often!" said Kate. "One realizes the worth of a thing sometimes more

by its want than its possession."

"Wesley did not go beyond the truth when he said,

[&]quot;'Jesus, to whom I fly,
Will all my wishes fill,—

What though created streams be dry— I have the fountain still.'—

But we look away from the fountain, and think of the streams,—most of all when they are full. That is one reason why so few reach Mrs. Barstow's high stand above the world—the tide of happiness often bears us the wrong way."

"Gracie dear," said Kate after a pause, "what are you

looking so grave about?"

"Thinking—" I said, starting out of my reverie which had fastened upon her last words. What possible lessons would the want of my sister teach me?

"Thinking? of what? Look up at me-you are tired,

dear."

"No not a bit."

"When I was almost a child, Gracie," said Mr. Collingwood, "some one gave me a beautiful Daphne. It was my perfect pride and delight,—I kept it in my own room upstairs, gave it every possible attention, and often sat watching it as if it had been a living companion. But one day when I had been talking to my mother of the pink buds that were unfolding one after the other, she told me that so lovely a plant deserved a larger room; and that if I brought it down into the parlour, other people could see and enjoy it too. I remember my plea that I was oftenest upstairs—and her smile when she answered 'that makes no difference',—I can understand it well now!—Cannot you, Gracie?"

I understood it all,—but I fear my smile was a little qualified. It was answered very kindly, and he went on.

"There was one judgment that I never thought of questioning, and my Daphne was placed in the parlour that very day,—but it seemed as if my own room had lost half its furniture. And yet I could hardly regret it. My favourite was so abundantly admired, its sphere of pleasure-giving was so much enlarged, its sweetness spread so much further—I had to be content with the change; and though my little room looked empty when I went into it, if I set the door open my Daphne was never long in finding me out."

I sat looking along the road in a mood too touched, too sorrowful, too comforted to speak.

"What made you think of this story?" said Kate, who having missed the clue, had taken it all in straightforward

simplicity.

But Mr. Rodney only smiled, and telling her that it would be hard to account for it except by the association of ideas, we got up and pursued our walk,—warned by one or two little pats on the forehead that April showers might come down in May. Happily they did not then, and we met no interruption till it was furnished by Mr. Barrington; who instead of passing us with his usual peculiar greeting, on his way home to dinner, stopped short. As there was by this time a reasonably large umbrella of blue sky over our heads, we stopped too.

"I've been away to the Glen to find you Mr. Colling-wood," said Ezra, "and they said you wa'n't there—so I gin to think folks was nigh as much out of the way as

things."

"What is the matter?" said Mr. Rodney.

"Matter enough!" replied Ezra with a gloomy air,—"I don't rightly know what to do with myself nor the farm nother. Why there ain't no two ways about it sir!—a place can't be took care of without there's sunthin' done to it—that's as plain as my name in capitals."

"Very plain indeed," said Mr. Rodney, whose face by no means reflected the gloom; "but what is in the way

Mr. Barrington?"

"Land knows, sir!—I'm beat, for once. Seems to me as all the rail fences is made o' muskits, and every woodchuck in the hull of them a pinter! No offence Mr. Collingwood, but you see if two men sends their guns different ways, like enough one on 'em'll get hit."

"Well, tell me what the guns are, and then I shall be able to judge," said Mr. Collingwood with a smile that

quieted Ezra's scruples.

"Why sir Mr. Carvill ain't a mind to have nothin' done, no place.—'Don't dreen that 'ere mash' he says, 'cause the woodcocks likes it,'—and 'don't plough that 'ere field 'cause the quails wants it jus' so.' And t'other day he ketched 'Lisha scaren the patridges off the wheat, and

'what on airth are you doing that for?' he says,—'leave it alone in the name of all the royal family,' he says, 'the more they eat the fatter they'll be.'"

While Mr. Rodney endeavoured to bring his muscles

into speaking order, Ezra took breath and went on.

"When he was down a spell ago he went on pretty reasonable like, but it's my belief he'd blaze away at the chickens now, if there wa'n't nothin' else! And it's as clear as a commentary to my mind, that if the birds is to have the hull o' the farm there won't long be gunpowder to shoot 'em—without it grows some place else than here. So that's just how it is sir," concluded Mr. Barrington with a look and tone of honest vexation. "I thought maybe you could do sunthin'—and if not—why so. I don't want to meddle nor make. I'm sure."

"So am I sure of it," said Mr. Rodney. "You must do whatever you think best with the farm,—I will speak to my brother about it. Follow your own judgment on all

points unless you hear from me again."

"Thank'ee sir," said Ezra. "I should like to see myself doing anythin' I didn't think best!" he added with a shake of the head that was aimed at Mr. Barrington neglecting his duty. "Why them patridges has been scared out o' their wits regular, ever sen! He don't go to the same place above once a quarter. But now Mr. Collingwood, if I go on and dreen that 'ere bit o' swamp—maybe you've heerd tell what's the likeliest thing to put onto it. Old Squire Brown says 'tain't good for nothin'; but my eyes are as straight as hisn; and I know it 'ud be first-rate if I could only fix it."

"What swamp is it?"

"It's just that wet bit 'long side o' Squire Howard's land."

"Beyond the pine wood? I should think lime would be the best thing to put on it, Mr. Barrington, if I remember what the soil is."

"Lime sir!" ejaculated Ezra with an astonished face.
"Then you're clean out for once, Squire Collingwood,
—lime ain't no count on this farm, anyhow."

"What makes you think so?" said Mr. Rodney with a

smile at his unwonted appellation.

"Reason good, sir, I've tried it. I sowed line on that 'ere side-hill beyond the clearing, and it wa'n't a speck of use but harm."

"I dare say," replied his adviser; "but that land is very different from the swamp. It has been found out, Mr. Barrington, that on some soils lime will destroy the bad qualities and improve the land, while to others it does nothing but mischief. I am pretty sure you will like the effect of lime upon that swamp after your drains are finished; and then I would sow Timothy and June grass."

"I'll put 'em all on, for sartain!" said Ezra, whose surprise did not seem to abate. "Edication's a wonderful thing! And you'll tell Mr. Carvill, sir, that the woodcocks

has got to move house?"

"I will speak to him about it, certainly." And we were permitted to walk on.

"Well you have surely studied a variety of things!" said Kate. "Such comprehensive education is a little wonderful."

"You forget how much I once had to do with hay-fields,"

said Mr. Collingwood with a very amused face.

"And you have not forgotten that talk about the coat yet?"

"Not quite," said he smiling,-"nor the time when I

was 'only a farmer,' Katie."

"But we never saw you in a hay-field," said I—for Kate did not seem disposed to speak. "How should we remember that you ever knew anything about the matter?"

"Do you mean to say Gracie, that if you ever had seen me there, swaths and winrows would be unpleasant to think

of?"

"Yes, very," said Kate laughing—"I don't believe you ever were there, for my part. But now I was not so far wrong,—one must judge a little by the occupations of a person—till one has something else to judge by. If a man is only a farmer, he will always be only a farmer—in all probability."

"Therefore you see, Katie, that it is necessary to set that little seal *only* just in the right place. Often the world knows but half of a man's doings, and not a quarter of the reason for those. Some people undertake certain business only because they must; and though that is not generally the case, yet in this country the safest maxim is

'men and not things.'"

"I wonder what else papa has amused himself with telling you!" she said with a half laughing half doubtful shake of the head. "But if I had learned no wisdom by our years of experience, I should deserve to be thought anything of."

The smile which answered her might have been translated,

"And as it is, for 'anything' read everything."

"What do you think of a little practical wisdom in the way of getting out of these rain-drops, Miss Daphne?"

said Mr. Collingwood.

She looked up in surprise, but then finding the clue she had wanted before, her resemblance to the very delicately-tinted "Odorata" decidedly decreased; and as her eyes went back to the view before us, Kate gravely remarked that it "was raining very fast at Wiamee."

"And how about the answer to my demand?" said Mr. Rodney. "I think too much dampness does not agree

with the members of your family."

"I'm afraid it is not very practicable wisdom—the trees would be but doubtful shelter."

"There used to be a house somewhere near here—a little further down the road,—yes, I see the smoke now."

"O it's Mrs. Houghton's,"—I said. "Don't you remember, Kate? We went there one day last summer with mamma."

"Hamilton, it used to be."

"It's Houghton now, Mr. Rodney—we can go there. I only hope her desire to see us again has not died out."

To all appearance it was in full force. One might have thought Mrs. Houghton's house a desert, from the way she

rejoiced over the shower.

"If it'll only pour down till supper-time," she said, "I shall be too tickled for anything! Miss Howard there ain't a doubt on my mind that your shoes is wet. No?—can't be they're dry. Show me now. Dry, indeed! do tell if that's what you call dry down to your house! Ain't that soaking, sir?" she said, adroitly slipping off Kate's shoe and displaying the sole of it.

"It looks a little damp, certainly," said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"Now what'll you do?-sit up to the fire and toast

your feet while the shoes is drying."

"But our feet are quite warm," said Kate, "and the

shoes dry enough."

"Don't tell me!" said Mrs. Houghton,—"can't be, you know,—if it could why I expect it might. They ain't so big you need mind having 'em looked at."

And carefully setting up our shoes in the fireplace, Kate and I had no resource but to put our feet in the same region; for the currents of air were rather cool with stock-

ings for a medium.

Mrs. Houghton looked on with great satisfaction; and then drawing up a rocking-chair and planting her heels firmly on the floor, she proceeded to rock herself and her toes vigorously through the air,-talking the while with equal animation. She was a rather tall and slim woman, scrupulously neat in her dark stuff dress; but with dress and hair too, in that state which sailors call "cleared for action." Mrs. Houghton might have put herself through any gymnastics without much discomposure of externals. Her face was very busy and cute; good-humoured too, and rather good-looking; and seemed to say that instead of being disturbed by difficulties she would find a way to get over them. Her house had as comfortable and get-on a look as herself; and that the progress of the rest of the world was not forgotten, might be guessed from the weekly newspaper and monthly magazines which lay on the table, as a sort of light advanced-guard to the very primly arranged books by the wall. From the moment of our coming in, Mrs. Houghton had taken Mr. Collingwood for our brother; and our intention of undeceiving her was soon put to flight,-indeed to speak without interrupting the lady of the house was for some time no easy matter.

"Don't it beat the world," she said, "that Parson Ellis should be going away? I never was so cut up about any-

thing! Ain't you as sorry as can be?"

"But he is only going to Ethan," said Kate,—"we hope to see him very often."

"What's the good of seein' a man if you can't hear him?"

said Mrs. Houghton disdainfully. "His explanations went

beyond everything."

"I am very glad you like him so much!" said Mr. Collingwood warmly. "But perhaps he may preach here often, still, Mrs. Houghton."

"Won't get a chance,"--she said with a toss of her head. "As if that young one would stay out of the first pulpit he ever had a right to be in !-they say he's a dreadful handsome young feller too-with eyes like nobody knows what."

Why we did not astonish our hostess with a perfect shout of laughter, is to this day a mystery; for if her words wanted any set-off, it was furnished by the quick flash of the eyes in question as they sought first ours and then the floor. If the rain had been anything less than pouring, I think we should have taken French leave and rushed out. Fortunately for us, Mrs. Houghton looked not to see the effect of her speech, but began another.

"The little sense folks have passes credibility!—for as I say to my husband, what's the odds?—whether his hair curls or whether it's straight or whether it's crooked? and if his eyes are brown he could see just as well out of 'em if they were green.—I don't go to meeting to see personal appearance—if I did I could stay home. There ain't a spryer lookin' man in town than he was when I stood up

with him."

"But don't you like Mr. Ellis's looks?" I said with a

desperate effort.

"I guess I do! but there's something of him, bless you! He ain't so tall as t'other one neither, they say. Wellthe earth's always rolling about some way, -as I tell my husband, 'tain't much wonder if folks once in a while knocks their heads together."

"I don't believe that will ever happen to Mr. Ellis and Mr. Collingwood," said Kate smiling,—"they like each

other too well."

"Think so?-well-don't you know nothing else about

him? don't you sir?"

"I know something about him," said Mr. Rodney looking gravely up from the carpet.

"Tell on then, do."

"I think you had better get acquainted with him first, Mrs. Houghton," said he smiling. "It is not good to be prepossessed either for or against people. Are you afraid of the weather now?" he added, looking at us.

"Them shoes hasn't an idea of being dry," said Mrs. Houghton interposing, and setting the shoes down again decisively. "Is the new minister a going to preach next

Sunday?"

"So I have been told," said Kate.

" What did you call him?"

"Mr. Collingwood."

"I've put his name in my head about twenty times, and it won't stay. I expect I'll call him Ellis the first time I see him—or maybe Fowler—that was my last minister's name before I moved here. I always do just so—I'd been married ever so long before I could remember my own name. And we'll hear him next Sunday, you say? I wonder what's the use of a man's tryin' to preach till he's old enough to know a little about himself!—let alone other folks."

"But," said Mr. Rodney, "if men were not to begin preaching till they were as old as Mr. Ellis, they could not be very experienced ministers until they were almost too old to preach at all."

"Well"—said Mrs. Houghton with a half convinced air;
—"maybe so and maybe no; but it would take a smart

man to stand in Mr. Ellis's shoes."

"He is most excellent, most lovely! you cannot love

him better than I do."

"He's got such a sight of gumption, too," continued our hostess. "Now I don't care to go to meeting without I can have something to show for it,—I tell my husband it ain't worth the trouble—though he don't think so,—I believe he'd go if there wa'n't nothing there but the meeting-house."

"And the minister—I suppose," said Mr. Rodney.

"Yes, I suppose so," said Mrs. Houghton with a somewhat curious side-look at her guest. "But as I said before, when I go I want something to show for it."

"And what should that something be?" said Mr. Rodney as he rose and brought the full earnestness of his eyes to

bear upon her. "What should we have to show for every

day we live as well as every sermon we hear?"

"Sir?"—said Mrs. Houghton as her look became graver and then fell before his. "I don't know, sir—I should be glad to have you say."

"Clearer knowledge of God's will, and more earnest and heartfelt practice of it," he said gently. "Seek that, Mrs. Houghton, and then whether ministers stay or go neither

sabbaths nor life will be thrown away."

While we quietly took up our shoes and put them on, and refastened the shawls we had thrown off, Mrs. Houghton neither moved nor spoke, nor indeed looked except at her apron-string,—we were in some doubt whether she were not offended. But as we came up to her she left her seat and bade us goodbye very cordially.

"I've enjoyed your visit tip-top," she said,—"I wish you'd come again. And you too, sir—we'd be as glad as can be

to see you."

"I will surely come," said Mr. Collingwood as he smilingly gave her his hand. "Let me be a friend Mrs. Houghton, little as I deserve to succeed Mr. Ellis."

"Don't tell me!!" exclaimed our hostess with a face of the most despairing amazement. "Well I never thought to see this day go over my head!—it ain't possible that I've been a talking to the new minister about himself?"

Mr. Collingwood laughed, and telling her that it had given him a great deal of pleasure to find out how well Mr. Ellis was appreciated, he opened the door; but Mrs.

Houghton pulled Kate and me back to the fire.

"Now Miss Howard," she said, "for gracious! tell him I didn't know what I was talking about, no more than a baby. My stars! if I hadn't found out till I was hearing him preach, I should have gone right down through the meeting-house floor. Why I didn't know him from Adam! Well I do feel cheap! Is he easy affronted?"

"O no-not at all!"

"Do tell!" she repeated with additional emphasis. "Well if ever I talk to a living soul again till I know what his name is, my name ain't Mary Jemima!"

We reached home without further adventure, but this one

left us no want of merry topics.

"Gracie," Mr. Rodney said, as he stood talking for a moment in our little sitting-room, "you look grave in the midst of your laughing. Are you thinking still of that remark of Kate's?"

"Not just now-I was, I believe."

"Cannot you put it into your little head that 'mine' and 'thine' are not always separate interests and possessions?"

"I am trying very hard, Mr. Rodney,—maybe I shall succeed by and by. And indeed I would not keep the Daphne upstairs—sometimes I wish it could be in both places."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Are ye doin' aught weel? are ye thrivin' my man?

Be thankful to Fortune for a' thaf she sen's ye;

Ye'll hae plenty o' frieu's aye to offer their han',

When ye needna their countenance—a' body kens ye.

A' body kens ye,

A' body kens ye.

When ye needna their countenance—a' body kens ye

OLD SONG.

IT was plain that most people's ideas about "only" were defective. For some years my father had been only Mr. Howard struggling on against difficulties,—now, he was Mr. Howard to be sure, and not rich, only he was Greek professor at Ethan. The position of the word made that of the family; and the sudden affection and admiration with which we were regarded, fairly got the start of reciprocity.

"Many thanks!"—as we sometimes said after the departure of a carriage-load of visiters; "but the friends who

'When winter comes, are fled'-

can add little to the summer's sunshine!" Once learn the relative weight of gold and tinsel friendship, and all the fair show of the latter can never again delude you. So we made whatever advances and returns the circumstances called for, talked and laughed with those who wished to talk and laugh with us; and found our daily happiness in the very few friends and things that had kept it alive during those years of trial.

Among all the people who now "took us up," there were perhaps none more zealous than those of our city acquaintances who with other strangers had become a sort of swallows to the Moon, and swallowers of its sulphuretted water. To be sure they had most reason—had

known us longest-and could look back and recollect how

they had "always liked us."

The day of our involuntary visit to Mrs. Houghton, when Kate and I came down after a somewhat long and talkative dinner-toilet we found Mrs. Willet in the drawing-room. A suspicion of somebody there had hindered our seeking out my stepmother, and by no means hurried our motions.

"Here they come at last," said the lady. "Why you look like May roses—just as sweet and fresh as can be."

"How long have you been home, Kate?" said my step-

mother. "I did not hear you come in."

"Some time, mamma—we have been dressing."

Mrs. Willet examined the effects thereof.

"That's a beautiful silk of yours, Kate—a new one I suppose. Suits your complexion too—did you make it yourself?"

"We find it pleasanter to employ a dressmaker," was

the quiet reply from Mrs. Howard.

"Where have you been walking?" said Mrs. Willet.

"In the neighbourhood of Wiamee," said Kate, by no means choosing to give an exact answer.

"My dearest Kate! you do not mean to say that you

and Grace have walked to Wiamee all alone?"

"No ma'am."

"But I thought you just said so?"

"I said we had been walking in the neighbourhood of Wiamee, Mrs. Willet—we did not go quite to the village."

"And alone?"

"No ma'am," said Kate again, with a little flush of vexation at this string of cross-questions. "Mamma, were you uneasy at our being out in the rain?"

"No, not much—it did not rain long here."

"May I ask who was with you?" said Mrs. Willet, whose grave face had seemed to say that she was trying to puzzle the matter out by herself.

"Mr. Collingwood."

"Oh, then you were safe, of course; but my dear why didn't you say so at once? Never make a mystery of anything—and in this case there was no need,—if you had

lived a little more in the world Kate, you would know that nothing is more common than for a gentleman to join any of his lady-friends he may meet;—and I don't know that his being your pastor need make any difference."

The world was in a conspiracy against our risible mus-

cles that day!

"I'm so sorry he didn't come in!" pursued Mrs. Willet. "Where did he leave you?"

"Not before our own house was in sight," said Kate, with

a look that promised small information.

"But I wanted to see him so much!—and I do suppose I was here when you came; and Grace might have run to call him back if I had only known!"

Grace's mouth gave a little twitch of great doubt as to

such a possibility.

"Dear me, I'm so sorry!" repeated Mrs. Willet. "I drove to the Lea this morning to see Mrs. Carvill—you know she's just arrived—and Mr. Carvill said he rather thought his brother had some very disagreeable business on hand that would keep him all day, but it seems he was mistaken. And now I've just missed him here. I never saw such a young man to get sight of!"

We could not help smiling at Mrs. Willet's small knowl-

edge of Mr. Carvill.

"What time are you going to have dinner?" said my father opening the door. "Mrs. Willet—I did not know you were here, ma'am, or I should have practised more circumspection."

"How do you do to-day, Professor?"

"Rather tired, as a man, ma'am,—as a professor I'm about as usual."

"Why what's the difference?" said Mrs. Willet.

"Well I used to think there was none," said Mr. Howard with a meditative air; "but it's astonishing what mines of knowledge we walk over without finding them, unless one happens to be sprung,—then, if we survive the explosion, we learn a great many things we never knew before. As, for instance, how much it takes to kill a man—how most people dislike the smell of gunpowder—and so forth."

"Bless me!" said Mrs. Willet, whose face expressed a vain attempt to follow the speaker, "I'm as afraid of gun-

powder as can be, myself. But now do tell me the differ-

ence between a man and a professor?"

"A professor, ma'am," said Mr. Howard stroking his chin thoughtfully, "is always himself,—he is made of some galvanized material that withstands wind and weather;—whereas mere men are subject to all the effects of cold, hunger, wealth, poverty, manners, habits, and education. A mere man is weak, and needs artificial supports,—the professor stands alone—in his coat."

"Where on earth did you pick all that up?" said Mrs. Willet, with a look of such blank wonder that for us not to

laugh was impossible.

"Out of a mine that sprung one day when I was on top

of it," said my father coolly.

"Well you are a most extraordinary man or professor, or whatever you call yourself! Dear me, I should think you'd puzzle your students to death. Do you always talk such things to them?"

"Not yet," said Mr. Howard; "it is necessary that they should first learn to creep as men, Mrs. Willet, before they can hope to spread their wings and soar off pro-

fessors."

"The professor has sent my wits soaring off," said Mrs. Willet,—"I have absolutely forgotten what I had to say to you. O—Mr. Howard, you are coming to spend next Wednesday evening with me."

"Am I?" said my father.

"Now don't interrupt me—I say you are all coming to spend that evening at my house; and I want you to bring Mr. Collingwood along. I've tried to get sight of him, and can't make it out. Don't you think you'll see him before Wednesday?"

My father took a grave survey of the ceiling.

"Probably I shall, Mrs. Willet-if he happens to come in my way."

"Well will you promise to bring him?"

"I'll promise to tell him what you say, ma'am, but as to bringing him—he is not in my leading-strings, I assure you."

"I never saw such a roundabout man in my life!" said

Mrs. Willet getting up in despair.

"Why Mr. Howard," said my stepmother, "what has come over you?"

"Only one of the phases that man is subject to, my dear. But what is your message, Mrs. Willet?—in case, as you

say, that I should see Mr. Collingwood?"

"Tell him," said Mrs. Willet laying her hand impressively on my father's arm, "that he must come to me next Wednesday,—that I cannot do without him, and shall be exceedingly displeased if he does not. I wouldn't give you the trouble, but if I were to write he would just send me a refusal as he has before—and I don't want to go to the Lea again. You are so much about, that you're more likely to see him than the rest of your family, or they could do it."

"Am I?" said Mr. Howard. "Well—I'll deliver your message as straight as I can remember it, Mrs. Willet,—further than that I charge myself with no responsibility. But see—Mr. Collingwood will like enough ask what you want him for, and I am in perfect ignorance myself. Is it to be a ball—or a masquerade—or a soirée musicale?—must we take pumps or wind-instruments?"

"I never saw anything like you!" said Mrs. Willet. "It's to be only a little tea-drinking for social intercourse. Mrs. Howard, will you make him understand and remember?—no, I can't stay any longer—Philip has come,—good-

bye, and don't forget Wednesday."

"What will she think of you, papa?" Kate said when he

came in from handing the lady to her carriage.

"My dear I am quite willing she should have any thoughts she can get at;—if she had been as ready to let

us have dinner, it would have been pleasant."

And then as he often did when he came home, my father took us both in his arms, and spoke for the ninety-ninth time his delight at seeing his children look as they ought to do!

"The first thing you know, papa," said Kate laughing, "you will have to give me one of your old lectures on

pride."

"No I shall not," he answered gravely and looking down at her upturned face; "because you know my dear, pride is always considered very unbecoming in a clergyman's wife—so I am sure you would have too much good sense to indulge in it. That is a luxury reserved for the secular

departments."

I thought—it half seemed to me as if Mr. Howard thought too—of that Newyear's morning years ago when he had stood just there and called Kate his rosebud,—the eyes that rested on her wore so much the same expression—and her's cast down, as they were then. But it was with a graver face now that my father kissed her and walked away.

Mr. Rodney received Mrs. Willet's message with a look that was rather doubting in the midst of its amusement.

"It's to be nothing in the world but a little drinking tea

for social purposes"—urged my father.

He smiled, but not in a way that promised much for Mrs. Willet.

"I fear it will be of a kind that I particularly dislike, sir,
—where fifty people are asked to a private tête-à-tête with
the hostess."

"And what is the exact number who can have the honour of meeting you at one time?" said Kate laughing.

"As many as feel disposed—but not without my consent

asked and obtained, Miss Kate."

"I would take my chance of the fifty rather than of the

hostess, in this case," said my father.

"How you do talk!" said Mrs. Howard. "But really Mr. Rodney you need not fear any trap, I am sure. Mrs. Willet was very anxious to have Mr. Ellis at her house once more before he went, and not unnaturally wanted some of his friends to meet him there."

Mr. Collingwood came and bent down by Kate.

"Are you going, Daphne?"

"Perhaps!—if I don't change into 'mouse-ear' before that time, and feel shy of company."

"If you do I shall change into 'cat's-eye' and find you,"

said he laughing.

"What a dreadful idea!" said Kate when she could compose her face. "I will turn into something else. But people should not talk of what they don't understand—there never was such a plant heard of!"

"I beg your pardon-I have seen it. And have studied

Daphne till I know that it always has some mouse-ear characteristics."

"I hope the debate with closed doors will have a favourable end," said my father. "If you have any scruples concerning Wednesday, Mr. Rodney, I being quite disinterested, can perhaps resolve them better than Kate."

"You must not say no," said my stepmother,—" Mrs.

Willet said you 'must come.'"

"I am a little afraid of people who make such imperative demands, Mrs. Howard," said he smiling. "However, if you are all to be there, and Mr. Ellis, I believe I must change my mind and go."

"Change your mind? had you heard of this before?" said

Kate.

"Yes, from Carvill. But his speeches are generally twosided—so perhaps I got hold of the wrong one. And I must have the pleasure of seeing how Daphnes look by gaslight."

"You are altogether too botanical"—said Kate. "I wonder if I am to stand representative for all the vegetable

kingdom!"

"Not quite—" said Mr. Collingwood—"I should make a selection. I have not time to tell you them now, but you will find some in your little Scotch song of 'the Posie.' Do you remember?"

"I can remember one name easier than a dozen"-

"But one is not always appropriate. Snowdrops would not answer at present; and I am afraid even the Daphne is a little put out of countenance. I should have to choose

"The pink-the emblem of my dear."

"I don't know what I should choose for an emblem of you!" said Kate—"teazle, I think. And that would be a pity, too, for it's a disagreeable sort of a thing."

"Not like me, either—" said Mr. Rodney laughing.
"That never detaches itself, and Katie, I am absolutely

going away!"

"You will come and go with us Wednesday evening?"

said my father looking up from his book.

"Thank you sir, no—İ am sure I shall not be at leisure so early as you will leave home."

With what pleasure we laid our hearts open to the bright influences of that Wednesday—in all its beauty of weather and scene! It seemed rather a climate for exotics than for the hill-side heather that had so long faced

"Chill blustering winds and driving rain;"

and we let thoughts and words flit about as gaily as did the winged creatures of the material world. How pleasantly we talked away the morning,—now dwelling upon subjects too dear for anything like mirth, now amusing ourselves with the advantages of being "professor's daughters"—of which we had several new reminders, in the shape of embossed envelopes of invitation. The end of the day bid fair to be the least pleasant part of it: but that must be gone through like the rest.

With great consideration Mrs. Willet sent her carriage for us just when we were ready; but as my father declared his intention of being "a man" for that evening, we had the pleasure of the quick drive and early arrival all to

ourselves.

The Moon society had changed and enlarged so much since we had been of its acquaintance, that even in that small assemblage there were more new faces than old. Captain De Camp appeared, as large as life; his epaulettes having been burnished with a legacy till they had caught the eye of the oldest Miss Willet. Mrs. Egerton came forward—so glad to see us that it was a wonder how she had lived through the last few years; while Mrs. Willet and Mrs. Osborne, with their respective daughters, were in

an ecstacy.

We had sat talking for a while, and I had found out with great satisfaction that the fair face at my side was the centre of attraction and attractiveness, when Mr. and Mrs. Carvill entered the room. The same as ever,—the lady dressed to perfection, if one might judge by the looks which she received, but with eyebrows that rather wondered at her own condescension in permitting them; while Mr. Carvill's face was much too grave to be trusted,—the demureness of his greeting to Mrs. Willet was like the true quaker colour of gunpowder. He took a free and easy survey of the rooms, and first giving us a propitiatory

bow, he came over and shook hands,-just as everybody

about us flitted away to see his wife.

"It is no excuse for a man's rudeness that he did not know to whom he was talking," said Mr. Carvill, "but further information may induce him to repeat his apology. Miss Kate, I am particularly sorry to have given you any cause to dislike me."

Kate could very well have dispensed with the repeti-

tion.

"Can't quite understand how it ever happened, either—" continued the gentleman. "I must confess—I have had a presentiment for a long time Miss Kate—if not from the first day I had the honour of seeing you—that we should by some means or other become at least better acquaint-ances,—not to say friends—or any thing else."

"Is the growth of acquaintanceship so extraordinary a thing that it requires a presentiment to bring it about?" said Kate, with some effort after her usual composure.

"Extraordinary?" said Mr. Carvill—"no one can apply that word to any circumstance of the present case—possibly!—Unless indeed—it does seem a little remarkable—pray where is the Admiral to-night?"

"Who, sir?"

"Thought he was to be here—" pursued Mr. Carvill, who seldom deigned to explain himself, and taking another look round the room. "I supposed he was to act as convoy to certain transports,—hope he hasn't lost 'em by the way. N'importe!—it will give me a little chance to talk to you; and allow me to say, Miss Kate, I wish it might give you a little desire to talk to me—as the nearest representative of the said Admiral,—or is he better known to you by the synonyme of Lord Rodney?"

"What shall I talk about, Mr. Carvill?" said Kate, who felt a little doubtful concerning the best means of self-

defence,—"the weather? don't you admire it?"

"Exceedingly," said Mr. Carvill folding his arms as if the subject was to be a long one; "and the roses—I never saw them so flourishing,—so many too—such beautiful contrasts of white and red and all the shading-off tints. Have you a good supply, Miss Kate, or may I have the pleasure of furnishing you with some new ones?" "Thank you, Mr. Carvill," said Kate, in whose face there were indeed "beautiful contrasts" she could by no means keep down, "but I think we have varieties enough—at least as many as we can take care of. What a very fine rose the Devonia is—and the Princesse de Nassau."

"Very fine—" said Mr. Carvill with a slight shrug of the shoulders,—"Clemence thinks there is none like it;—but after all, rather pale—I greatly prefer the blush roses, though there are one or two whites worth having. Ah Miss Kate!—if I could but give you a Parisien bouquet! all of roses, but assorted with such skill!—c'est incroyable. For instance, they would take first a full-blown Compte de Paris with an opening Victoire modeste, and a few buds of La Tourterelle—that's an extraordinary rose!—then a half-blown Hyménée and Velours épiscopal; and surround the whole with buds of Ne plus ultra and Bouquet tout fait. You cannot imagine the effect—it must be seen."

The effect was seen by one person at least, and roused her to an unwonted piece of boldness in the way of diver-

sion.

"What colour is La Tourterelle, Mr. Carvill?" I said. "Is the name descriptive?"

"Perfectly so, Miss Grace—you have no idea how they

set off the two principal roses."

"And do you think you could give us a bud sir, at the

right season?"

"With the utmost pleasure—only unfortunately I haven't got one myself. But I intend to send for some by the next steamer—if they come safe you shall have as many buds as you want,—also of Hyménée, Miss Grace—if you think you would like that. And by the way, I came here under the impression that you and I should offer each other mutual congratulations."

"On what account, sir?"

"Hardly time to congratulate any one else"—said Mr. Carvill—" and I have a great desire to say something to somebody. I have had a vague idea, Miss Grace, that if the wisdom of the united parishes of Wiamee and the Moon had been less strikingly displayed, our enjoyment of the course of human events would have been somewhat impaired."

"A striking display of wisdom is without doubt a pleasant thing," I answered.

"The only pity is," pursued Mr. Carvill gravely, "that individuals are not bound by the same laws as communities. Don't you think it would have a fine effect if a part of that admirable Declaration of Independence which I have already quoted, could be more frequently put in practice? You probably remember its general drift-

'When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for two people to dissolve the bands which bind them to all others, and to assume the separate and equal station to which they are entitled, a proper respect to their fellow-creatures, requires that they should declare the rea-

sons which compel them to the separation."

"That is rather a free translation," said Kate. "Free?" said Mr. Carvill—"don't know, I declare—yes, I believe I should have said induce or persuade, rather than compel. And if you would prefer a more literal wording still—But I perceive that Mrs. Willet is of the mind that ladies should

'Sometimes counsel take-and sometimes tea.'

-Miss Kate-will you gratify yourself and me by taking Mocha or Souchong? Or if you are nervously inclined, perhaps I may venture to recommend 'a dash of cold water."

"I shall not venture to follow your recommendation, Mr.

Carvill. I will take coffee if you please."

"Sweet?" said the gentleman displaying an immense lump of sugar for her approval. "Or does a concentration of the saccharine principle make extrinsic aid a matter of indifference?"

"That is just about twice too much. Did you ever learn, Mr. Carvill," said Kate, "the name of the next principle that is usually developed after the saccharine?"

"Must be a sparkling one—so far as I can judge," replied Mr. Carvill. "I was under the momentary impression that the gas lights were amusing themselves."

Some one else claiming his attention at this moment,

we were allowed a breathing time.

"My dear Gracie!" said Kate from behind her coffeecup, if "I had the power of transformation you never saw a veritable mouse's ear run away as I would do! If anybody would only keep somebody employed for the rest of the evening!"—

"And if employments would only let somebody else go

free."

"Miss Kate," said Mr. Ellis coming up to us, "I never saw you looking so well!"

"You have seen me feeling a great deal better, sir,"

said Kate half laughing.

"Eh? — what's the matter with your sister, Miss Grace? not downhearted about my going away, is she? Don't you think you'll all get reconciled to it?"

"What is a good basis for a reconciliation, Mr. Ellis?"

said I laughing,—" your coming back very often?"

He shook his head.

"Ah you've been studying with your father. No, I sha'n't come back very often,—not at all—till I'm wanted. But here comes my successor, and a better one no man need wish."

And Mr. Rodney, with his usual quiet and unconcerned self-possession entered the room, and made his way through the tea-table throng to the ladies of the house. How it took me back to that first evening at Miss Easy's, to see him standing there,—with the same half-concealed amusement, the same steady doing as he chose, in spite of other people's fuss and endeavours; and withal, the same touch of gravity in face and manner which far from hindering the most free and playful intercourse with those around him, preserved it always from any taint of their trifling or world-liness. His mind was like a planet—which in all its daily revolutions never fails to advance in its orbit round the sun.

"I never look at him, Miss Kate," said Mr. Ellis, "without thinking of the old sailor's remark about a ship's sails—

'how quietly they do their work!"

"That could not be said of everybody in there," said Kate, as she looked through quite an atmosphere of gestures and exclamations.

Mr. Ellis smiled, and put his hands softly together once or twice, as if in gentle commiseration for human nature.

"I must try and have a word with him before he is fairly engrossed by any one else."

And as Mr. Ellis moved off, his place was immediately taken by Mr. Carvill—who I felt sure had been watching for it.

"Fairly come at last!" he said,—"took an observation first, like a true sailor, and then tacked off to declare himself in port and show his colours. The queerest thing is that nobody can tell exactly what they are.—Now there's my wife—declares when he's away that he's nothing but an American; but before he has talked to her five minutes, she is equally sure that he must hail from Port au Prince—or some other high-born region. Miss Kate, may I ask you a very rude question?—do you speak French?"

"Yes," she said with a smile.

"Very glad—indeed!" said Mr. Carvill—" perhaps that may enable me to do what I have been trying for this long time. It's so desirable that all the members of a family should know and like each other—and Clemence has a mortal aversion to speaking English."

"But I thought you liked French, Mr. Carvill?" said

Kate gravely.

"Like it! of course—think I do! Miss Kate, you shall excuse me if I enter into no unnecessary explanations as to which member of the family was in my mind. How will the Admiral ever steer clear of all those mamma continents and daughter islands!"—

"He does not seem to be attempting it," I said smiling.

"Beg your pardon, Miss Grace—but the Adventure is naturally anxious to join her consort the Recluse, and the Admiral has surveyed the north-west passage at least half a dozen times."

How I did wish he would come, and put an end to a kind of attack that was growing rather painful. Silence was our only resource, for every shot on our part only furnished the enemy with new ammunition,—when indeed he had plenty of his own left. Our end of the room was almost deserted,—near the other end Mrs. Carvill occupied a sofa, while several gentlemen had the floor in front of her; and a few young ladies were leaning upon the piano and playing with their tea-spoons. By degrees however the tide turned, and continents and islands came floating in together.

"The Admiral is trying to break through the ice in his

way—extraordinary machinery!" observed Mr. Carvill as his brother seated himself by Mrs. Carvill—thereby scattering her group of dawdlers—and engaged her in a few minutes earnest conversation. Then rising, Mr. Rodney gave the lady his arm, and bringing her across the room fairly placed her by Kate, with the simple remark,

"Mrs. Carvill wishes to renew her acquaintance with you,

Miss Kate."

I thought we were not the only surprised ones of the party, and for a few minutes Mrs. Carvill seemed more disposed to use her eyes than her tongue; but Mr. Rodney stood quietly furthering his object—joining in and drawing out as he knew well how to do,—warding off at least some of Mr. Carvill's attacks, and preventing so far as he could, the transformation of the Daphne into any other flower whatever

"You do not care for société"—was Mrs. Carvill's first remark,—" you sit here so qui-et."

"Yes, I care for it very much," said Kate smiling.

"But you have talked this evening a plusieurs gens—as if, a votre gre, you would have been silent."

"Have I? but 'il y a gens et gens' you know, Mrs.

Carvill. You would not call everybody society?"

"Tout au contraire!" she said most expressively,—
"there is very little that I should call that in this country

—there cannot be."

"You are reading the proverb backwards," said Mr. Rodney with a smile; "it used to be 'Tant vaut l'homme, tant vaut sa terre'; and you say 'tant vaut la terre, tant vaut l'homme.' It would be hardly fair to take for granted that all America's sons and daughters are as rough as her rocks and mountains."

"Rough!" said Mr. Carvill—" talk of rocks and mountains with your eyes fixed upon roses!—never knew before how many trains of thought a man can carry on at once."

"You did not carry on but one? non plus?" said Mrs.

Carvill with one of her peculiar looks.

"Have been carrying on two all the evening—" replied Mr. Carvill; "one concerning my brother, and another in a diametrically opposite direction about these young ladies,—got a little confusion among 'em too, which was catching."

"What is the greatest fault you find with society here, Mrs. Carvill?" said Kate.

"Mais—some of them do not know, and some of them do not talk—et les autres sont si bêtes!" she said with an expression of disgust.

"Il y a toujours de l'homme partout," said Mr. Rodney.
"I do appreciate those faults, though," said Kate—"'some do not know and some do not talk,"—they are not always

faults, either-they are oftener mistakes."

"Mistakes!" said Mr. Carvill. "Miss Kate will you

enlighten my ignorance?"

"I mean sir, that many persons err in supposing that certain things are not worth knowing, and that certain others are worth talking about. Mr. Rodney," she said, her eye almost unconsciously seeking one where she felt sure of sympathy, "you remember what Addison says—'as few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation'?"

"I remember it well; but I fear it will be some time before the society of this hard-working country reaches

quite that point of perfection."

"And which has been my mistake this evening, Miss Kate?" said Mr. Carvill,—"the not knowing some things or the talking about others?—must have made one of the two—for you would not talk to me. Did I say too much about my own business affairs?"

"I should like to know what they are!" said Mr. Rodney interposing, for Kate's face gave rather a quick answer. "If you talked about guns and dogs, I don't wonder Miss

Kate had nothing to say to you."

"Dogs!" said Mr. Čarvill—"never shall make a distant allusion to that subject again—don't think she likes it. I wouldn't even dare to ask her to look at Canis major."

Mr. Rodney could not help smiling; while Mrs. Carvill with a little impatience at what she could not quite understand, said,

"Est-ce là ce que vous appellez conversation?"

"Je fais place a vous," said Mr. Carvill bowing. "And yet now I think of it—since it has been touched upon—Miss Kate—I believe you have the dog-rose in your collection?"

"Miss Catherwood," said Mr. Rodney suddenly laying

his hands upon Mr. Carvill's shoulders and bringing him face to face with a young lady who was passing us, "will you permit me to furnish you with an escort wherever you

are going? My brother, Mr. Carvill."

And when we could recover our gravity, we had a few minutes quiet, which Mrs. Carvill chose to improve in a somewhat unexpected manner. She had been watching every word and look of Kate's as if she wanted to make up her own mind about her; now giving most grave attention, now smiling a little that anybody could be confused about anything. Perhaps she thought this last point wanted a remedy, or else the kindliness which I had seen growing in her eyes wished to show itself; for touching Kate's cheek as if she had been a child, Mrs. Carvill said with a half smile.

"Est-ce que vous mettez votre rouge toujours ainsi?"

The rouge declared itself natural by unmistakeable signs. "Elle sera amie à toute épreuve," continued the lady, looking up at Mr. Rodney as if it never entered her head that Kate could dislike the subject,—"si belle! si bonne!"

"Comme je vous ai dit"—was the answer, given as gravely as if the idea had never occurred to him either.

"Oui, et plus. J'en feraisœur de tout mon cœur. Mais —Cateau—votre ami aime mieux vos yeux eu haut qu'en bas,—le tapis n'en est pas digne."

"C'est l'affaire qui est sur le tapis," said Mr. Rodney

smiling.

"But Mrs. Carvill," said Kate, trying to rouse herself and clinging to English as if she thought French ground dangerous, "don't you think it is right sometimes to bestow things where they are not quite deserved?"

"I do not know—perhaps—" said Mrs. Carvill, again eyeing her as if she were a very mollifying piece of simplicity.
"M. Rode-ney—elle doit faire tout votre contentement."

"Oui," he replied with a smile of very full assent,—
"mais Clemence, ce n'est pas à prier."

I believe for once Kate was not sorry to see Mr. Carvill come back.

"Mr. Collingwood," he said, "if it were not for alarming the present company, I should express my displeasure."
"What about?"

"Your most unceremonious behaviour, sir."

"'Turn about is fair play' sometimes, at least," said Mr. Rodney laughing,—"I think the want of ceremony was on your side for leaving Miss Catherwood so speedily."

And then up came Mrs. Willet and made a pounce.

"My dear Mr. Collingwood, for what earthly purpose are you standing up all this time?"

"Simply to talk, ma'am."

"But can't you talk sitting down?"

"No ma'am," said Mr. Carvill, "Rodney never enjoys a conversation unless he can use his eyes as well as his tongue; and in that respect his present position gives him what one of my neighbours calls a 'félicité,' that no armchair could do."

"But I am not talking of arm-chairs—Mr. Collingwood.

do let me take you to the sofa."

"The sofa! no thank you, Mrs. Willet-I think I am

more in place here."

"How bright you all look!" said Mrs. Willet surveying us by turns. "What have you been talking about?"

"Friends and foes," said Mr. Carvill.

"O! not foes I hope! that's quite shocking. Mr. Collingwood do you permit such things? Why didn't you come to us earlier to-night?"

"I thought I had explained to you Mrs. Willet, that I

was unavoidably detained."

"But you didn't tell me why?"
"No ma'am, I believe not."

"You ought to take care of your health first of all," said Mrs. Willet with her favourite attempt to reach the mind through the arm. "Now don't you think so? answer me conscientiously."

"I think that I always take excellent care of mind and body—when I do my duty," he answered with a slight

smile.

The lady puzzled over the arrangement of his words for

a moment, and then took another subject.

"I am so delighted that we are to have you here—I was talking about it yesterday. But you look as grave as if I had said I was sorry."

"My brother, ma'am," said Mr. Carvill, "feels his mind

naturally engrossed to some degree by the prospect which lies before him,—after a few weeks he will be better able to answer the congratulations of his friends."

"Do tell me if it is true that you are going to leave the

Lea and live in that cottage all by yourself?"

"Do you ever believe all that the world says Mrs. Willet?" said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"But my dear sir, you ought not-will you mind if I

tell you what I think about it?"

"I won't promise to mind, ma'am," said Mr. Rodney, but in a way that quite captivated Mrs. Willet,—"I have a little of the perverseness incident to human nature."

"O you know what I meant. But now, really if you will live there you ought to have some one to take care of

you.'

"I intend to take the best possible care of myself."

"Yes, yes, but that won't do-you should engage a first-

rate housekeeper. Now promise me that you will?"

"I have had some thoughts," said Mr. Collingwood looking up with praiseworthy composure, "of getting one that

my father used to have."

"I think Mr. Ellis will provide him with one, ma'am," said Mr. Carvill with a glance at Kate, who though she was talking to some one else gave most unwilling notice that she heard him.

"Poor Mr. Ellis!" said Mrs. Willet, "he is all alone on the sofa,—you must go and sit by him—I do so like to

see clergymen sit together."

Mr. Collingwood ventured not to reply, but looking round to make sure that Mr. Ellis was really there, he walked gravely across, and taking the desired place sailed off into too deep water for Mrs. Willet to follow. But let him alone, she could not—so long as he was within hail.

"Mr. Collingwood, you really should put your arm round

Mr. Ellis."

"Suppose I don't want him to, ma'am," said Mr. Ellis.
"O you must!—it's so pleasant to see clergymen affec-

tionate!"

"Ostensibly? ma'am," said Mr. Rodney looking up at her with an expression that made every one else laugh.

"Any way," said Mrs. Willet. "Now won't you just

oblige me? there's something so sweet about it."

Mr. Rodney laughed, and sending one glance of inexpressible comicality to where we sat, he threw his arm over the back of the sofa but by no means near Mr. Ellis, and quietly resumed his conversation.

"I have got them both on the sofa together," said Mrs.

Willet approaching my father and taking his arm.

"Both who?" said Mr. Howard looking towards Kate and Mrs. Carvill.

"The two clergymen—see."

"O—Did they want to be together, Mrs. Willet?"

"Bless me! Mr. Howard, what a strange question!-

how could they help it, sir?"

"I'm sure I don't know, ma'am. Have you any sofa exclusively appropriated to professors?" said my father look-

ing about him.

"My dear Mr. Howard!" said Mrs. Willet laughing, "here is an arm-chair for you—won't that do? Now sit down there like a nice man and keep yourself quiet—I'm going to make Kate sing."

"I'm afraid it will dislodge the clergymen, ma'am," said my father,—"Mr. Collingwood is remarkably fond of

music."

But Mrs. Willet had turned off.

"Kate my dear, you must come and sing for us."

"Shall I have the honour of being deputy escort and piano opener?" said Mr. Carvill.

"Qui vous a déligué?" said his wife, who was no friend

to inuendos.

"Never mind, my dear—suppose you persuade Miss Kate to sing 'Où peut on être mieux qu'au sein de son famille'—it's a remarkably fine air!"

"Come!" said Mrs. Willet.

And Kate by a rather quick and skilful movement escaped Mr. Carvill's vigilance, and escorting herself to the piano sang whatever was called for,—even, at last, Mr. Carvill's song; for everybody took it up so warmly that she could not get off.

And Mr. Rodney and I stood close behind her to listen. "Miss Kate," he said, offering her his arm as she hastily

left the music-bench, "Mrs. Howard commissioned me to tell you that you would find her in the dressing-room."

And leading her up to Mrs. Willet while my father and I followed, we made our adieus, and emerged first into the hall and then into the cool starlight,—how refreshing to both mind and body!

The next day, Mr. and Mrs. Carvill called at Glen Luna.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The "wilt thou" answered, and again The "wilt thou" asked, till out of twain Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

TENNYSON.

THE days flew like a flock of robins in the sunshine— L every one showing some bright touch of gold or crimson; and though it was "summer weather," even I could not be sad: Kate blew away every cloud as fast as it rose, and Mr. Rodney half deluded me into the belief that they were but the remnants, not the beginnings of bad weather. say half-for there was sometimes that at my heart which said they would not all blow over. Especially when a quick expression of my father's eye or change in his voice, or some unusual tenderness shown for me by Mrs. Howard, said that my trial stood neither alone nor unappreciated. Yet were we very happy, in spite of it all. Ah love is not always selfish! if ever people were happy self-denyingly, we were; and Kate looked at me sometimes with eves that were all tearful in their gratitude. And so the thirteenth of June came and passed, and late in the evening we stood out of doors in the moonlight, looking quietly at that fair combination of "Luna and Luna." The light was faint at first, as the twilight died away, and the lake was more like a steel mirror than any other; and the shadows were but faintly marked out upon the deep shade which covered the earth. The stars shone with a very softened light, as if the warm weather had damped their energies, and the wind might have been exhausted as well; for it only now and then rustled the elm leaves at the corner of the house—as it were just by way of putting its finger in. The insects were the only busy part of creation, unless it was the flowers; and they grew sweeter and sweeter beneath the dew, thus rendering back that best of all gratitude for kind offices—improvement. By degrees the glimmering lights at the Moon showed less distinctly, and the scene seemed fuller of objects, and a bright half-circle in the eastern sky told what was coming. Then the lake whitened, and the trees threw themselves across the lawn, and Wolfgang came out from what had hitherto been but a dark spot on the gravel walk; and then—

"The rising moon has hid the stars; Her level rays, like golden bars, Lie on the landscape green, With shadows brown between."

And clearing first the horizon and then that inner boundary

of woods, Luna herself looked down upon us.

She was variously received. Two or three smart little dogs on the other side of the lake rather thought if people were in the dark it was as well to let them stay there, and barked their discontentment at being enlightened. Two or three cocks were quite willing to wake up, but they rather thought it was not the moon but something else—and crowed over the discovery. And without raising his head Wolfgang signified what he would do to them all if they were within reach.

For us, we had stood looking on in absolute silence, except the slight foot-token now and then of a change of position; but as the light strengthened and our figures came out with the rest, we looked first at the moon of course, and then at each other,—then my eyes went away again to the darkest spot they could find—I was half inclined to be of the little dogs' opinion.

"The silent moon" was too talkative for once, she went over all my past life; and the other face I had looked at was too full of the future,—I almost felt as if the present were nowhere—had no existence. Not quite,—for even with the feeling my hand sought Kate's and they were fast

clasped together.

"Do you remember," said Mr. Rodney, perhaps thinking that it was time to draw us from our thoughtfulness or to explain his own—for he had stood there with folded arms as silent as the rest of us. "Do you remember Katie those lines of William Harrington's upon 'the Firmament'?"

"No, I don't know that I ever read them."
"Won't you repeat them Mr. Rodney?"

"I do not recollect them all myself, Gracie. They begin,

"' When I survey the bright
Celestial sphere:
So rich with jewels hung, that night
Doth like an Ethiop bride appear;

"' My soul her wings doth spread,
And heaven-ward flies,
The Almighty's mysteries to read
In the large volumes of the skies."

I was thinking of the many efforts men have made to find physical means of sailing through this forty miles of air, and how the wings of the soul lie folded by, forgotten and out of use."

"And then?"

"And then of the different flight of those which are spread,—how some flutter down because their supports are not well-grown or of the right kind; while others 'mount up on wings as eagles'—and return to earth, one might almost say, never, except for 'works of necessity and mercy'."

"And that reminded you of Miss Easy."—

"My thoughts go back to her from almost every point—and they could not fail of it to-night, of all others. Yes, I remembered her—how unlike most people in the simple, undivided, walk and aim! what years of very dear friend-ship I had with her! I was trying to satisfy myself with those words of Rutherford. 'The star that once shined upon Galloway, is shining now in another world'—for if she has not the joy of seeing her wish accomplished, neither does she need it. But I came back again to the mere sprinkling there is of such lights upon earth."

"I shall add another 'and then'," said Kate.

He smiled as he answered,

" Why ?"

"You have just given us the starting-point of your thoughts, and I think it is exceeding pleasant to know whither they lead one,—if there be no reason against it."

"There is none in the world, Katie; but it would be too long an 'and then' if I gave you all their ins and outs and wanderings. With the rarity of a thing comes the thought of its difficulty, and then the remembrance that the question is not of ease or of numbers,—that the essential characteristics of God's children cannot change. And there my thought found these words written,

"'For they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."

He paused a few moments, and then went on.

"I was thinking most of that—thinking, my dear Kate, with unspeakable pleasure! that we are both 'bound for

the kingdom'!"

There was no more said then, for some time, except as the clasp of Kate's hand told me that the word "both" had for her a double bearing. Then she said in those very quiet, low tones where several feelings as it were moderate each other.

"How strongly in a few simple words, the Bible draws a portrait, while men with their numberless tints and touches sometimes almost cover up what they attempt to

make plain."

"That is a portrait of three-fold power," said Mr. Rodney,—"at once a test, a reproof and a promise. Henry Martyn took it for his first text when he had left home and friends for ever—and I have felt some need of preaching it to myself to-night.

"But not to you, my dear Daphne," he added, and laying a very gentle hand upon her brow—"I should not think your spirits needed schooling. I fear I have sent your thoughts whither I meant not,—where are they busy?"

But she gave him no answer except a slight shake of the head, with a very little bit of a smile to bear it company.

"How beautiful the lake is!"

"Very,—but you should see those Bermuda channels that your eyes are like, Katie."

"To cure me of any wild notions I may have on the

subject."-

"Precisely! If they run too wild to be cured at home I shall take you there for the purpose,—and Gracie to have hers confirmed."

"I will take it upon trust, sir," I said smiling.

"What proportion of the Moon do you suppose will go to church to-morrow?" said my father coming towards us from a "green settee" with Mrs. Howard.

"Why nobody knows anything about it, papa," said I.

"Then I shall have to wait and see."

"O papa!—I mean about to-morrow"

"Well," said Mr. Howard looking down the lake to a square front of lights that displayed itself illumination fashion, "I don't pretend to know much about it, either; but if Mrs. Willet is not at this moment contriving how to wake up early, and bribing Captain De Camp to give her the benefit of his military experience, it is only because some newer idea has supplanted Mr. Collingwood."

"Which is not at all impossible," said that gentleman smiling,—"therefore long breaths may as well be kept till they are needed. I hope that time will not be to-morrow,

dear Daphne," he said as he bade her good-night.

The moon told me a great many things during those few minutes when we were silent again, till the last step was beyond transmitting, even through the stillness of that

night.

"What a strange thing 'to-morrow' is!" soliloquized Mr. Howard. "A point of pleasure—a point of pain,—dreaded, wished for,—it enters your life, and already its wedge-shaped train of consequences spreads out before you; and lo, 'to-morrow' is something else!"

"A wedge of pleasure, or of pain, papa?" Kate said

softly, and laying her head on his shoulder.

"Of pleasure, my dear child," he said passing his arm round her. "Pointed it may be, with pain—with mixed metal certainly—but bringing as I truly believe very pure happiness for you, and for us through you. And not even the weakest among us," he added, resting his lips on her forehead, "would evade the one to-morrow—for the sake of those which shall follow it."

And there was another pause, while each one tried to throw off the dread of that point which no endeavours could blunt. Then my father spoke again, and in quite a different voice.

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Carvill coming here to breakfast?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Howard.

"Are you sure, mamma?" Kate said, looking up despairingly.

"Unless they change their minds, dear, -which is not

very likely."

"Aren't you glad?" said my father smiling.

"I am not indeed."

"Can't be helped Katie,—it is generally an unfortunate thing to have relations, but since Mr. Rodney tries to like yours, you must even return the compliment."

"I would like them-if they would let me alone."

"That would be asking too much of some humanity," said my father, "and perhaps it is just as well for some other humanity that it is so. But do you recollect that humanity is apt to oversleep itself if it stays up too late o' nights?—I think we had better go to bed,—Gracie would be in despair, if you were hurried off to that morning drive

without a sufficiently elaborate toilet."

"Pointed with pain"—there was no mixed metal about it when I opened my eyes next morning,—a pain so keen, so heart-sickening, that for a few moments I could not wake the quiet sleeper at my side lest she should see it in my face. But that trying and yet blessed relief, necessity—the call for immediate action—came to my help; and with one kiss and word I roused Kate from the dream which had half given her a shadow of my waking thoughts. Her eye met mine—and as instantly her arms were about me and my face drawn down to hers,—then quickly disengaging myself, I went to the window and looked out into the early twilight.

The stars were lingering yet, even amid the eastern brightness which came on apace, and before which earth's deep neutral tint was fast changing and the moon shadows melting away. The moon itself looked white and faint in the west,—the lake in its absolute stillness seemed to

say,

"When sorrow is asleep, wake it not."

The birds had no fear of waking anything but joy; and they sang—as if every egg-shell held nothing but happiness, and each nest had no straws but of pleasure.

I stood a minute—long enough for the mind to draw one of those quick, heart-felt comparisons that an hour's study

could hardly retouch, and then turned to find Kate close by me.

"Gracie," she said, with lips that would scarce be controlled, "if you are going to look so pale to-day, I shall not quite know what to do. Suppose you sit down here and let me dress your hair first."

"No indeed!" I said rousing myself.

"Yes indeed. You shall not touch mine till I have done what is needful to yours,—it has almost arranged itself."

"Wait till you see it when I have been in the garden.—I am going right down after flowers, and then between dew and bushes it will be in a pretty condition."

I should have been long getting them had there been time,—as it was, I thought gladly that Kate could not tell dew-

drops from tears.

With what pleasure I dressed her hair! ornamenting it with the loveliest of rosebuds and freshest of green leaves—not more lovely and fresh than the dear wearer, as every one thought who looked at them; while the bouquet de corsage displayed against its ground of white muslin the purple tints of heliotrope and violets as well as the soft colours of "the queen of the flowers." One other sprig, that I thought hidden among its more showy neighbours, Kate saw with tears that were hard to check,—the little blue forget-me-not.

"My dear Gracie!" she said, taking me in her arms,

"never-till I forget myself!"

And I could answer her almost calmly, braced now, with excitement. I could even watch—it was not very steadily—the looks that met her when she came down stairs; and I laughed with the rest, though no thanks to myself, at the wondering exclamation of little 'Dency Barrington,

"Don't it beat all, Mrs. Howard!"

The sun shone its brightest, the birds sang their sweetest, that morning in early summer, when we stood in the little church to see one of our few treasures made over to another's keeping. We were very glad—no one could help it who looked at them; yet did I feel that stirring within me which would by and by have its way. Not now,—I was as calm outwardly as Kate herself.

I had a general impression of other figures about me,

—of Mr. and Mrs. Carvill—of Mrs. Willet—of Squire Suydam's portliness and Capt. De Camp's epaulettes; with the angular forms of Mr. and Mrs. Barrington in the background. Yet these were but the trappings of the scene,—my eye thought nothing tangible but the place where they stood, my ear thought nothing real but their words—the words spoken to them were only a breath from dreamland,—I almost lost my own identity in that strange mixture of pleasure and pain. And as the sun rising higher and higher drove away the last shadow, and poured a full stream of light through the open church-door, even Mr. Rodney and Kate seemed a vision, in that bright halo. Only I knew that it enclosed but them, it reached not to me,—except as one tiny sunbeam strayed away even to my feet, as waiting for me to take it up.

A few words, a few looks, so real that I almost wished myself dreaming again, and we were once more in the fresh morning air, driving quick towards home. I noticed just one thing—that the fourth seat in our carriage was occupied by Mr. Ellis. By some happy combination of coachmen and horses we reached the house in advance of our visiters, and had a quiet five minutes before they

arrived.

Perhaps it was well as my father had said, that the two kinds of humanity should mingle at such a time. It may be questioned whether anything could have so effectually roused our composure and self-possession as the two pair of eyes which presented themselves at the end of that five minutes. But Kate heard their carriage approach, with a look that was only half resigned and the other half fearful.

"You seem to have very little trust in my protection, Daphne," said Mr. Collingwood smiling.

"I haven't a bit of trust in my own sense-"

And the face showed how very far the heart was from raillery, such as those quick coming wheels premised.

"You shall not be troubled," he said,—""more than with safety of a pure blush thou mayest get off again.' But my dear Katie do you know the best way to take hold of such plants as you once compared me to? If you touch them too fearfully there is the more danger of being hurt."

A very resolved little breath answered him, but so much more resolved than strong that we both smiled, though somewhat sympathetically.

"Perhaps my sense will come back to me," Kate said, trying to reassure herself with a laugh,—"at all events

don't think any more about it."

"No, I shall concentrate my thoughts upon some one else," said Mr. Rodney very gravely.

Mr. Carvill had certainly some reason for his first re-

mark.

"Miss Kate, it gives me extreme satisfaction to find that the torch which has been so recently waved over your head has not in the least impaired the freshness and profusion of your roses. I think I must felicitate you this morning upon possessing the true 'Cramoisi supérieur.'"

"And I think," said Mr. Rodney, "that 'Miss Kate' as you call her would like your conversation quite as well if

it were a little less flowery."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Carvill, "if you are not classical, that cannot be helped,—I perceive Miss Kate understands me perfectly. And as for that form of address—upon my word I'll change it when I can decide upon an alternative. If she were in England, of course—I might say Lady Rodney at once,—but here—"

"Je ne sais quelle finesse vous entendez à celà," said Mrs. Carvill, glancing from one to the other in uncertainty. "Mais Cateau—encore vos yeux! Etes-vous déjà

lasse?"

"Tant soit peu," Kate said with a smile, and raising her eyes "to order," though the lady's look of examination and interest was rather hard to bear.

"Et un peu craintive?"—said Mrs. Carvill with that same half smile and manner as if she had been talking to

a child. "Il ne faut pas de cela."

Kate might have been thankful for the quick look which protected her from Mr. Carvill's commentary on his wife's remark.

"Miss Kate," he said in a disconsolate tone, "I am for-

bidden to talk to you!"

"Not by me, sir," she said so gently and steadily that Mr. Carvill for the second time in his life looked a little

like the rest of his family. But his wife's next remark brought him back to himself.

"Que faites-vous de vos 'Mademoiselles'!"

"Eh bien—" said Mr. Carvill,—"dois-je la nommer par nom ou par surnom?—comment veut-elle qu'on l'appelle?"

"Cela s'appelle folie en bon François," said Mrs. Carvill

disdainfully.

"Cela s'appelle a reasonable question, in good English."—

"Tell him Katie," said Mr. Collingwood, "that a stranger

is never obliged to take the initiative."

"All I can do," said Mr. Carvill, "is to imagine myself

in Congress, and cry 'question!"

"Il est question de manger à présent," said Mr. Howard. "Break your fast first and your lances afterwards,

Mr. Carvill, if you please sir."

"But my dear Madam," said Mr. Carvill as he led the way with Mrs. Howard, "anything like eating does seem too material for the present occasion—when every mind is raised entirely above all sublunary things. With all deference—I would suggest—that the occasional burning of a pastille would have answered every purpose."

"Except that of keeping us alive till dinner-time," said

my father.

"He would not live upon air, no more than other people,"

said Mrs. Carvill.

"Never intend to try, my dear. You perceive Mrs. Howard that it all comes of not knowing who was behind me,—I had an indefinite idea that my immediate followers—I should say those whom I have the honour to precede—considered the fanning of Cupid's wings as quite satisfying and substantial."

But waving all rights of precedence, Mr. Rodney had given Kate the next place—much to her satisfaction.

"And your roses are not quite so flourishing as your sister's, Miss Grace," said Mr. Ellis.

"Aren't they sir? I am sure my cheeks have felt hot

enough."

"There is a little too much of the hot-house about them. They want rest,"

"They will have it Mr. Ellis," said Mr. Rodney looking round at us with a smile of very bright affection and interest, "when she is once fairly wonted at the Bird's Nest. When the tendrils find out that their beloved support is not gone—only moved off a little, they will cling as happily as ever."

"And to brother as well as sister, I am thinking," said

Mr. Ellis.

"I trust so indeed."

And then as we reached the breakfast-room Mr. Rodney quietly frustrated his brother's intentions, and placed me in the third seat, by himself and Kate.

"Voilà un homme qui sait naviguer!" said Mr. Carvill with an air of resignation. "Il cherche avant tout le salut

de sa prise. Well—'distance lends enchantment'!"

"See if you can make that rule hold good in all cases,"

said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"Vain attempt!" said Mr. Carvill. "I am sure that Miss Kate is saying mentally, 'ni de près ni de loin!"—

"Elle a raison," said Mrs. Carvill.

"That rule is of very general application," said Mr. Howard;—"it seems strange when you come to think of it, that pleasant things should have the most power to 'annihilate time and space,'—that distant scenes should come to us as it were distilled, through the long medium of years or of atmosphere."

"And yet the bitter has often most present power," said

Mr. Ellis.

"But you mean not to say," said Mrs. Carvill, "that every réminiscence est de couleur de rose? les choses désagréables durent aussi—n'est-ce pas?"

"Sometimes,-but the pleasure-winged minutes fly fur-

thest, I think," said Mr. Howard.

"I do not understand that."

"I think the will has a good deal to do with it, Mrs. Carvill," said Kate,—" on garde ce qu'on aime et passe par les autres."

"Remarkable exemplification of that before you, Clemence," said Mr. Carvill in a low tone, as if he did not wish to draw the attention of any one else to the fact.

"And then," said Mr. Rodney, "the mind in looking

back dwells oftenest upon the pleasantest thoughts, and so deepens gradually the impressions that were perhaps at

first but slight."

"The long and the short of the matter is," said Mr. Carvill, "that when this morning shall have been as Mr. Howard says distilled through a course of years, my fair vis-à-vis will find herself in the possession of a small quantity, of very strong, Parfait Amour. Are you fond of that cordial, Miss Kate?"

"Not in involuntary doses, sir,"

"Vous serez obligée de décliner votre nom, Katie," said

Mr. Howard smiling.

"Je ne le ferois point—moi," said Mrs. Carvill. "Mr. Rodeney—what for do you permit que votre amie soit si badinée?"

"Is my friend very much troubled by the badinage?" he said with a smile. "Mais Clemence que faire? Voulez-vous que je prenne un ton protecteur?"

But Mr. Carvill found the protection rather too powerful

for him till we got back to the drawing-room.

"I declare," he said then, "I will not speak another word to you to-day Miss Kate, if you will only settle that difficult question—que faut-il que je vous appelle?"

"Votre sujet, ce matin," said Kate smiling.
"To say that to me!" said Mr. Carvill.

"'A un homme qui jamais n'a fait la moindre chose A meriter l'affront où ton mépris l'expose!'

Miss Kate—if you will permit me to pay my respects at some future day, I hope I shall have recovered the power of speech."

"Quelle folie!" said Mrs. Carvill. "Allons—il faut le

pouvoir faire à present."

"And the question unanswered."—

"I will answer it for you—some time when I have nothing else to do," said Mr. Rodney.

But as Mr. Carvill remarked, that would be a remark-

ably long postponement.

I was proud and surprised and amused to see the way his wife looked at Kate. Of a singularly untrusting disposition—perhaps because she had been brought up among poor specimens of human nature—she seemed to have been half fascinated with the very true and trustful eyes which were my delight,—nor mine only. With all Mrs. Carvill's respect and liking for Mr. Rodney there was perhaps mingled a little reserve; but there was nothing about Kate to call for it, and Mrs. Carvill treated her as if she were the prettiest little natural curiosity she had ever seen,—and the most loveable.

"Cateau," she said, "quand comptez-vous être visible?

Et combien voulez-vous que je vienne chez vous?"

"Toujours"—Kate said, with no lack of cordiality in look or voice, but colouring at the same time so much, that Mrs. Carvill fairly laughed at her.

"C'est une vraie petite!" she said turning to Mr. Rod-

ney.

But he testified neither dissent nor disapprobation.

"Et la petite du monde la plus simple,—que va bien. Mais vous êtes mauvais enfant de regarder toujours en bas."

And laying her hands on Kate's shoulders and looking at her for half a minute, Mrs. Carvill dismissed her with a

summary little kiss and "mille amitiés."

"Il n'y faut pas tant de bruit"—she remarked as Mr. Carvill came up to make his adieus,—"vous pouvez dire 'sœur Cateau'?"

"C'est ça," said Mr. Rodney smiling.

"S'il m'est permis"—said Mr. Carvill deferentially,— "but she likes not compliments—and if I call her ma bellesœur—Madame Cateau, I beg you to think of it—and give me your definitive the next time we meet."

"O little Gracie!" Kate said as they left the room, "I have not had a chance to say three words to you. Come

and sit down here and talk to me."

"Shake hands with me first, young ladies," said Mr. Ellis.

"When shall we see you again, sir?" asked my stepmother.

"Hardly can tell ma'am—before long I hope. Only I sha'n't want to come until—how many days will it take the world and his wife to pay their visits, Mrs. Collingwood?"

But the very perceptible start with which the question

was met, prevented all answer but a general laugh.

"Ah I can't say any more to you after that," said Mr. Ellis,—"I advise you to take Mr. Carvill's query into consideration. But I didn't know that new notions had found their way in here."

"What new notions, Mr. Ellis?" said Kate. "I don't

think they have, -not to me."

'I'm afraid I shall startle you again," said Mr. Ellis smiling. "Don't you know there are some people who think 'it is best not to mention things'? It is getting to be the fashion now-a-days to call a gentleman's wife 'his companion'—and I didn't know what the vocative of that might be. But good-bye! And if there is any truth in the old saying 'Happy the bride that the sun shines on,' then will all my hopes and expectations be fulfilled; and the surpassing beauty of this morning be but an emblem of the life you two are to spend together."

It was indeed as good a personification of "jocund day" as could well be imagined. Warm-breathed, musical, rich with the deep verdure, aromatic from the time that Phœbus

"Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie haire,"-

the wind spoke its joyousness but softly, as if sympathizing with the hearts that trembled as the glad influences swept over them. But no heart let its trembling be known—strengthened by the very love that made its weakness. And all nature's voices gave us one happy reminder,—whatever difficulties might again surround us, they could not touch Kate.

Was there anything real in the quick-passing hours we talked away in our little sitting-room? it seemed so then, but afterwards I thought them only a dream. Talked?—ah it was often but the speech of eye and lip and hand,—words would not always come to those who wanted them most.

"Gracie," Mr. Rodney said after one of our moments of silence, "what are you thinking of so doubtfully?"

"Doubtfully ?"

"That was rather a dubious look that passed from Kate to me. Are you afraid I shall not take good care of your dear sister?"

"I am sure you will!"-

"Then what were you thinking of?" he said with a smile which could not be gainsaid.

"I was thinking-how much I like to take care of her

mvself."

"My dear child! you never liked anything with better reason. But Gracie, my care can reach a point which yours could not—so far you must be glad,—and further than that—my Daphne had a great deal of my attention after it came down stairs. What kind of a selfish mortal do you suppose I am?"

"I do not think you are selfish at all, Mr. Rodney," I said laughing, yet with eyes too full to look up,—"I believe

I am, sometimes."

"I should like to see you at one of those times," said he smiling,—"I shall be a very uncompromising guardian, now that I have taken upon myself a part of Kate's care for you.

But Daphne, I shall call for your thoughts, next."

"I was thinking of the unreasonable wish you had just expressed," said Kate raising her eyes from a very grave contemplation of her bouquet—"at least if all wishes be unreasonable which cannot be fulfilled. Gracie did you ever see flowers keep so fresh as mine have done?"

"Of course—I meant they should."

"You did not put wax on them this morning, in all your

hurry?"

"Not in a hurry, exactly,—but I wanted them to keep just so sweet and fresh all day, and not being a fairy I had to resort to common measures. Yes—they have not changed a bit,—except that there is no dew on them," I said looking hastily from her eyes to the flowers.

"I used to hear of a little fairy that was called 'Good-

will'," said Mr. Collingwood.

"There ought to be no dew on them now," said my father. "But you see Gracie that even the atmosphere of this day does not wither what was well prepared to meet it."

And after dinner we were to accompany Kate to her new home. Not in a carriage,—we did not want to go wheeling round that long road in the sight of everybody,—but we were to go through the woods; where we need have none to watch us but the song-sparrows and thrushes,—

where our eyes need see nothing but the soft play of the green leaves, and each other. And the afternoon was not hot, it had but just such an infusion of summer as made the shade pleasant, and our preparations for the walk very slight. I wished them longer,—my heart was taking up its burden now, when least able to bear it,—I felt that I was nearing some dreaded point, and the loss of a glove seemed a welcome delay. But once only my fortitude gave way,—it was when Kate paused for a moment as I had seen her do so many years before, to take one look at the home she was leaving. I remembered what I had felt then—I felt it over again now; and my steps lingered by Mr. and Mrs. Howard, almost behind them, till Mr. Rodney looked back and said in his very gentle and decided manner,

"Gracie, you must come and walk with us."

And then, though my heart caught at every touch of gravity that the walk could furnish, with the affinity that drops of water have for each other, my companions would not let me be sorrowful; and as we passed along the little path we had so often travelled—without any violent wresting of my thoughts from what they were so fastened upon—there was the constant showing of the bright side,—the most gentle attempts to make me see it.

"How quickly the grass has grown over this path!" I

said, with a feeling as if it were moralizing to me.

"The path will take its old look again, very soon, Gracie,
—'the grass will not grow under your feet' when you are
coming to see Kate."

"Nor under mine," she said, "when I am going to see you. How often do you suppose we shall meet half-way?"
"Not often," I said rather falteringly, but smiling too;

"for I shall always set out first and run the fastest."

"I shall have to teach Wolfgang to run with you, Gracie," said Mr. Collingwood,—"this is too lonely a walk without

company."

"Ah you never could teach him that! see even now, how he stops and looks round to make sure you are following him. He never has stayed with us since you came home, Mr. Rodney."

And as we approached, Wolfgang gave a reassured wag

of his tail and trotted on.

"I wonder," I said, "what ever made him take such a

special fancy to Kate?"

"Don't you remember," said Mr. Rodney smiling, "that I once told you how he and I always understand each other?

I have no doubt his obedience was given wittingly."

I was very calm again; and keeping close by Kate's side could look at all within doors and without that was so hung with associations, and talk of the many pleasant things we remembered in that place. Never had it looked more lovely. In all its old perfect order—the very flower-baskets filled with tenants as sweet as those that had long ago withered,—years had wrought no change but of improvement; and but one thing seemed put beyond that shadowy line which divided the present from the past. But one, said I?—nay in those bright days beyond the line, there was no place for the something which at last began to assert its power, as I sat by Kate looking up and listening—happy in spite of that weight. And yet it deepened; and as it were spread over all my heart,—a very film of ice.

Again Mr. Rodney came and sat down by me, and softly

disengaging one of my hands, kept it in his own.

"Gracie," he said, "do you remember that talk about the jewel and Portia?"

"Yes"—I said.

"And have you looked at your jewel to see how you

like it in its new setting?"

Not as I looked then-and I had never seen it look so The fair image I had dressed in the morning was unchanged, even to the drooping of a rosebud; and there seemed an indescribable adornment of circumstance and position—it might be of imagination—that made me feel the jewel was where it ought to be-where it would shine best. I could not wish it elsewhere. And as my eyes, too full to look longer, again sought the floor, Mr. Collingwood said with a tone and smile that went to my very heart,

"Are you content with it, dear Gracie?" And looking up at him I answered earnestly,

"Oh yes!"-

With the weight a little lightened now, by the gentle directing of my thoughts and by Kate's loving kiss, which said the jewel was still the same; and not least, by seeing

how precious it was in other eyes than mine; I again sat quietly listening,—learning as Mr. Ellis had said, to cling to brother as well as sister. "Ay de me"! I could not

sit there always!

The others had left the house, and still I bent over the wicker-stand and smelled the flowers as if they were my only care. But I did not dare raise my eyes, and every moment brought less and less trust in my own self-command. At length as two or three tears had fallen upon the roses, and I had nearly laid my own face there, for very weariness and grief; Kate softly put her arm round me and said,

"They are calling you, Gracie love; -good-night."

I looked up, but without seeing a thing,—felt their kisses upon my face, knew that Kate held me very close in her arms for a moment, and then that I was out of the house.

I reached the road, and stopped.

It was late in the afternoon. In such weather and time of year had we first come there. Again the Cherokee roses were in full bloom, again the Baltimore birds fluttered about their nest; again the long sunbeams came over the lake and fell softened upon the pretty bay-window;—but now at the open sash stood Mr. Rodney and Kate, watching me. My eye went no further—my heart was full.

Of sorrow for myself—of joy for them,—of mingled sorrow and joy for the dear friend who had wished just such successors; and turning away, I wept some of the bitterest,

sweetest tears, that ever fell from my eyes.

